



RAZZ OR CAKE

#35



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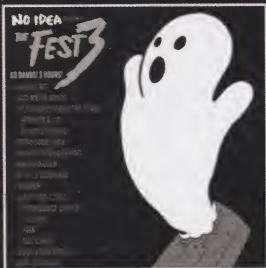
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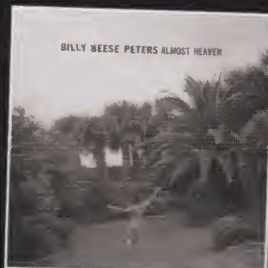
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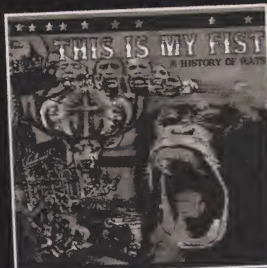




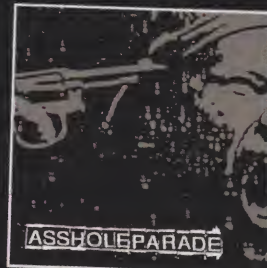
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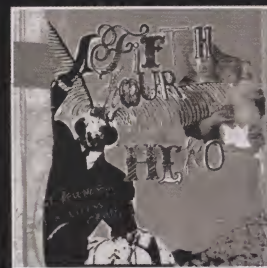
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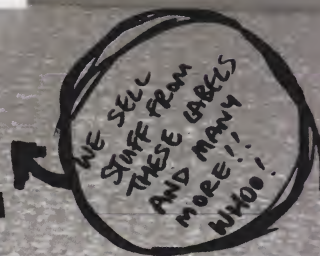


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RAZORCAKE

PRETEND I'M SITTING ACROSS FROM YOU. I'm smiling. On the outside, I'm calm, affable. Inside, I'm deeply angry.

My kite's been in a tree. As of late, there's been a seemingly endless chain of mishaps.

I wanted the little last bit of honey out of the squeeze bottle. The lid leaked and honey slowly oozed out on the other side of the counter. A week later, I found out that the high rotation section of my records were sticky. Not an entirely awesome way to pull out a Regulations record; sticking to Otis Redding, then plopping onto the ground.

I've been battling cockroaches and termites for the past six years in this apartment. (Razorcake's run out of two bedroom apartment. I sleep in one; the rest has been over-run by making *Razorcake*.) The bug guy, Caesar, came by and sprayed them good; pushed those little runts back to their hiding places. Two days later, for the first time ever, I scrunched two on the ceiling. This was almost as disconcerting as finding a momma roach on the kitchen wall, her back speckled with the movements of over twenty baby roaches hanging on like tumors. The crunch was satisfying, I have to admit.

I was also facing possible eviction for refusing to remove everything in the apartment so they could replace the carpet. The city of L.A. had purchased this disintegrating apartment complex and wanted to check off whatever's on their lists to avoid lawsuits. I told them that my place is like a Chinese puzzle box. It would take a good three days to disassemble all of the crates, cubbies, and desks to get through the front door, not to mention the silliness of it all. We made a compromise. Move my front room into the kitchen—which took a day—so they could stretch the wrinkles out. Now, I have same,

shitty grey, beer-stained carpet that I had before, but it's smooth. I've mentioned this to all my guests. No one's impressed.

Last issue, after picking up the mail and on my way to drop off our master copy at the printers, I pulled in front of a car, and whanged its front bumper completely off. The lady, understandably, was pissed. It was totally my fault. I spent the next three weeks in junk yards. With the help of many good friends, (Thanks Chris and Brandy. Thanks Bruce.) I got all the parts and totally boy scouted it. The replacement was better than the original. At the end, it was about 1/10th of what it would have cost if I had taken it to a body shop.

Getting back to zero is an accomplishment in and of itself. What does this have to do with this zine? Everything.

Pretend I'm sitting across from you again. Smiling strangely. I'm clenching a knife between my teeth. I'm pissed—about my brother being in Iraq, about the consolidation of media, about how many small things in my life must go wrong. I'm one of the nicest angry people you're bound to meet. But that's not enough. I have to fight it myself, not just complain. I'm not saying there's a light at the end of any of this. I'm saying that if you build it, it can't help but be a part of you. Keep getting smarter and better, because the charm of grassroots disorganization and empty complaints wears thin when ground up by forces mightier than you'll ever be.

When all this bad stuff was happening, we hammered away at another issue that I'm mighty proud of, and we're one step closer to not letting it all slip away.

If you and I don't, who will?

—Todd

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ISSUE #36

November 1st, 2006

ISSUE #37

January 1st, 2007

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Cover photos by Todd Taylor

"To those who see that by not playing and not giving in... they win."
from "Don't Bury Me... I'm Not Dead," —*Riverboat Gamblers*

This issue is dedicated to: Cujo, one of the best dogs, ever. R.I.P.

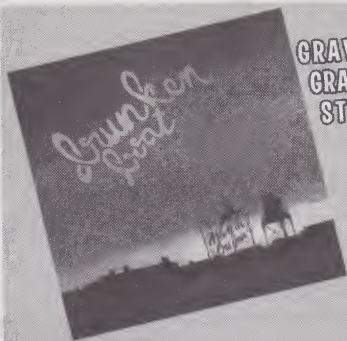
Contact *Razorcake* via our fancy website: www.razorcake.org



THANK YOU: Chew it up, then smooth out the creases thanks to Jesse for nailing another cover for us; 160 tiny Chinese heads thanks to Amy Adoyzie for the Billy Childish layout, whilst in China; Gentleman Squirrel thanks to BD Williams for the Billy Childish interview; and, fuck, look at that balanced, pointy moustache thanks to Mike Plante for the Billy Childish photos; Drunk blowdart thanks to Ben Lybarger, Sherry Cardino, and Keith Rosson for the Feelers interview, pictures, and layout; Glass eye, pizza, and free guitars thanks to thanks to Joe Evans III, Rudy Olivarez, and Uri Garcia for the Loved Ones interview, pictures, and layout; Probably going to be remembered as the Sun of the new millennium thanks to Julia Smut and Miss Erika for their Larry Hardy interview and picture; In this zine, size don't matter thanks to Parker H. Hasting and Aaron Kahn for the Whiskey & Co. interview and photos; people painted all silver are mimes in my book thanks to Megan C. Brooks for her photo in Liz O.'s column, Mitch Clem has captured Nardwuar's soul in comic form. Thanks; Serpents of rock thanks to Rafael Avila for his illustration in Dale's column; Joey Ramone, if he were made of Play Doh, kinda melty thanks to Terry Rentzepis for his illustration in N[rb]'s column; If they've got cooties, get your shots thanks to Mor Fleisher, Ryan Leach, Stacy Smilanick, Chris Devlin, Daryl Gussin, Gary and Katie Hornberger, and Kat Jetson for helping out with the big mailout; "You no like my band. You're a yellow journalist and I'll sue you," thanks to Keith Rosson, Greg Barbera, Mike Frame, Sara Isett, Stevo, Daryl Gussin, Comrade Bree, Ryan Leach, Donofrio, Jennifer Whiteford, Jessica T., Chris Devlin, Jimmy Alvarado, Susan Chung, Mr. Z, Josh Benke, Cuss Baxter, Jenny Moncayo, Sean Koepenick, Aphid Peewit, Joe Evans III, Ty Stranglehold, and Kurt Morris for their reviews.

TODD THANKS: Joe Meno and Todd Dills, two of the best touring buddies I could ask for... and Emily for the gunny sack of muffins prior to a fourteen-hour drive.

Cujo: friend and confidante of Julia Smut. Some dogs are people. Cujo was one of them. May there be endless slices of freshly roasted turkey for you...



GRAVEL THROATED SOCIO-POLITICAL POP-PUNK LIKE
GRANDMA AND GRANDPA USED TO MAKE. FROM PDX BUT NOT A SINGLE
STUDDED JACKET IN THE BUNCH...WEIRD. PROBABLY ON TOUR NOW!

hickey.



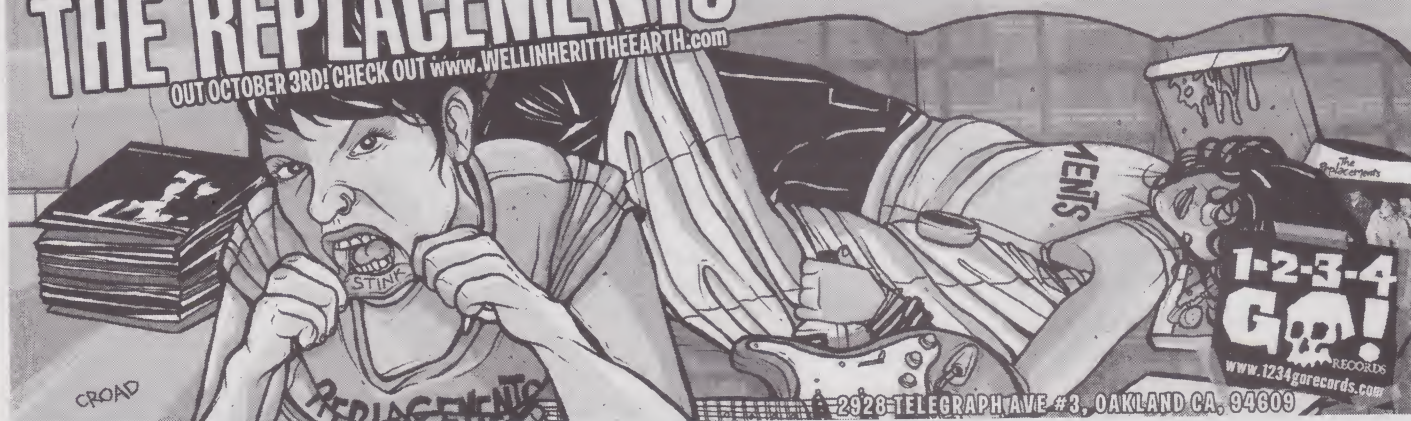
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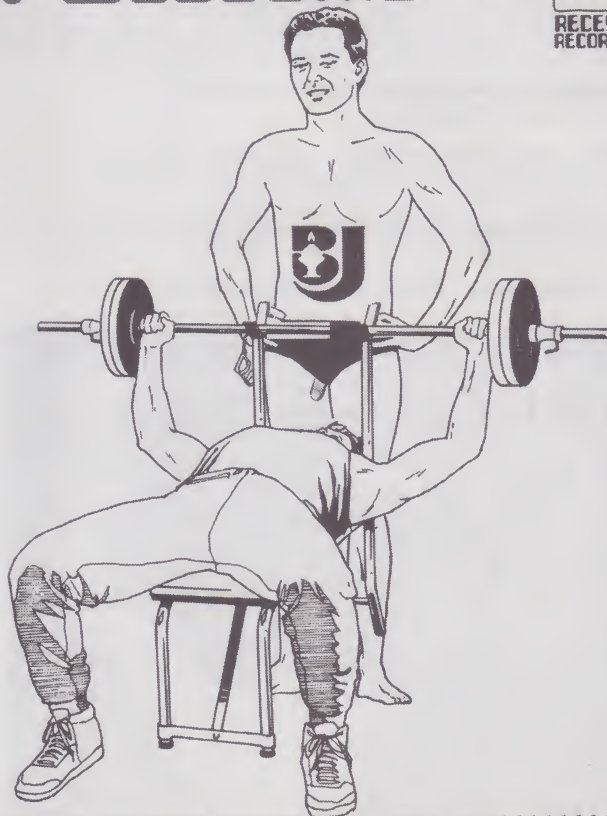
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RAZORCAKE

Issue #35 December 2006 / January 2007
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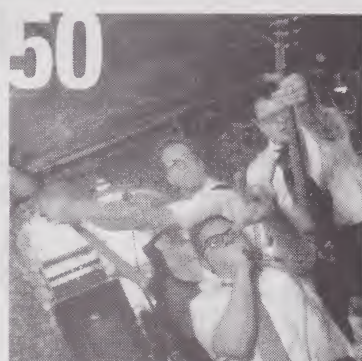
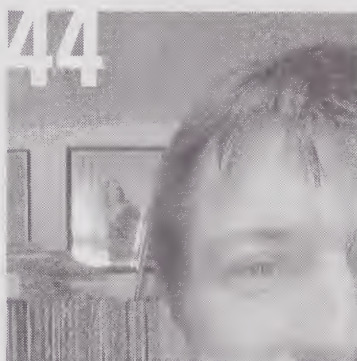
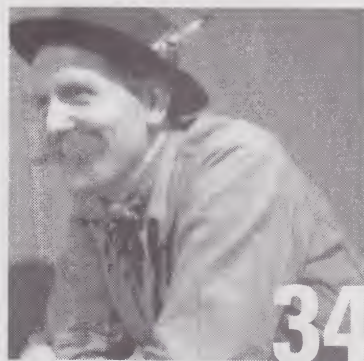
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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

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GUERRILLA MY DREAMS

"No amount of overly excited, probably overly intoxicated meat-heads could spoil our weekend."

unburns and Lemonade

"Sir, I don't think you understand what I'm saying. I have to go to the bathroom. Now."

The security guard looked at me and shook his head like that negative nod could ward off an impending flood. He wasn't going to let me past the gate. I had the wrong wristband.

"You can't go into the VIP area," he repeated.

My voice grew louder and whinier by the word. "But there is no bathroom in the press area. What am I supposed to do? Go in the dirt?"

He shrugged like this might be a viable option.

I walked back over to the press area, found the nice lady in security garb and told her what happened. She said she would try to talk to him for me. Her words rang deaf in his ears. Apparently, the only thing that he might understand at this point was more of my whining.

"Look, I'm interviewing a band in fifteen minutes. I can't wait for a press escort to take me inside so that I can find a port-a-potty and then wait for another escort to take me out here again so that I can do the interview. So, unless you want me to piss myself in front of [insert second stage Ozzfest band here], you're going to have to let me in to use the bathroom."

"Fine," he answered. "Just this once."

In actuality, "just this once" meant that I could go one time before the free water and soda filtered through the system of every journalist in the press area and he had no choice but to either let people into the VIP to use the bathrooms or spend the rest of the day wiping urine-tinged San Bernardino dust from his eyes.

Welcome to the summer festival season, where you will spend hours at length clutching your bladder as tightly as you grasp that five dollar bill that you really don't want to spend on yet another lemonade.

Ozzfest was the first of four summer festivals that my friend Megan and I covered this year as part of our self-imposed job description. We drove no less than two hours to Hyundai Pavilion at Glen Helen Dirt Farm, er, I mean Glen Helen Park with the intention of capturing the full outdoor

music festival experience. Megan did a pretty good job of covering the action from the photo pit, where she stood for roughly five hours in 110 degree weather until she was informed that nobody shoots Ozzy Osbourne. Nobody.

Meanwhile, I quickly learned that journalists covering big outdoor festivals oftentimes don't actually get to see said big outdoor festivals. With two hours to kill before my first interview, I tried to get into the show so that I might actually observe the band before I asked a round of questions.

"Do you have a ticket?" asked a guy who I remain quite certain is Wilford Brimley's evil twin.

"Sure," I showed him a Ticketmaster stub.

"Did you pay for it?"

"Uh, no."

"Then you can't go in."

He was losing me. It wasn't good enough that I was holding a non-transferable concert ticket pulled from an envelope with my press credentials on it. Apparently, I had to show a proof of purchase as well.

I wasn't ready to argue with the chief of security for anything, so I resigned myself to sitting under the tent in the press area whilst scribbling in a notebook waiting for bands to arrive so that I could look at them and say, "Well, I could tell you that it was a great set, but the security guard wouldn't let me watch."

In the press area, I befriended another writer and we swapped contacts in an attempt to maximize our list of quotes. The way I figured it, at this point, I wasn't going to have anything to say about the show itself, so I might as well interview as many bands as I could. This was where my background as a seasoned club kid actually came in handy. The one benefit of smoking patios at L.A. nightclubs is that it prepares you for making conversation with people you wouldn't know from a hole in the wall. Chat them up in just the right way and you might just hear backstage stories so vulgar that you know you can never place them in print.

In the end, I did get to see some of the concert. Sometime after I was hit by a dust storm and finally stopped the ensuing

deluge from my eyes, Megan sent me a text message. Her photo pass was only good for the first stage, so she had to meet me in the press area so that I could give her the keys to the car and then meet her back inside the venue. Thanks to the girl I had met earlier, I found the security guard willing to let press inside the show. Then Megan and I spent all of Ozzy's Early Bird Special performance looking for each other. We finally met up with each other on a slope patched with dead grass, where Megan kept her eye on two young children who were left to fend for themselves as their parents went on another beer run. I might have been better off backstage. At least backstage, I didn't have to scoot back in fear that the guy stumbling and clutching his mouth might launch a projectile vomit missile in our direction. We left shortly thereafter, worn ragged and with Megan enduring one of the ugliest sunburns I had ever seen.

In a Denny's in Ontario, after spending a half-hour in the bathroom blowing black snot from our noses and cleaning dirt from under our nails, we shoved French fries in our mouths, discussed sunburns and the tit-painting booth that charged according to breast size and swore that we would never do this again. Then we remembered that we were covering Warped Tour the following Wednesday.

Warped Tour is nothing like Ozzfest. Inside the Dodger Stadium parking lot, Megan and I stood out as the oldest people who were not chaperoning ten-year-old Rise Against fans. Outside of a few cans of Budweiser moistening the hands of some of the musicians backstage, there was no alcohol to be seen in or around the lot. Since a self-estimated ninety percent of the crowd appeared to be at least five years away from drinking age, this made sense. Maybe some of the older folks had a problem with this but, the way I saw it, how can someone even think about alcohol when it's this hot?

Yes, it was actually hotter in the center of Los Angeles than it was several days earlier in San Bernardino. It was the sort of heat where, no matter how lightheaded you feel, you still can't eat because of the fear that the



Photo by Megan C. Brooks

meal might not stay put. Instead of eating, you rely on the five dollar lemonade for sustenance, but no amount of tart, oversized drinks can quench your thirst. You try to find shade, but that is nearly nonexistent given that you are in a parking lot. Meanwhile, the sun beats down upon you so hard that no amount of sunscreen can prevent a blistering sunburn (nor can it prevent asphalt burns).

After the sun set, Megan and I chowed down on French dip sandwiches at Philippe's, where I sighed, "I'm not sure if I can do this again."

Then we found out that we were going to San Diego Street Scene.

At San Diego Street Scene, very few of the bands actually met with this press, which was fine with me. Fewer interviews meant

more time in the crowd. Or, more precisely, more time running from stage to stage so that Megan could get her photos during the first three songs time limit and I could make snappy mental notes such as the following.

Davey Havok is like Morrissey. He makes 250 pound dudes cry.

Thought the Siouxsie Sioux/Karen O comparisons were just because they are chicks, but have since realized I was wrong. I saw Siouxsie bust out the same moves, in what I think was the same costume, at Universal Amp in 1991.

What's with all the 'fros in the audience? Is this Wolfmother's doing?

I hate Tool fans.

Repeat that last mental note a few times. Megan and I muttered something similar

Davey Havok is like Morrissey. He makes 250 pound dudes cry.

when we left Street Scene in the midst of an, er, altercation involving Tool fans in the pit who never learned the lessons of pre-school, such as keep your hands to yourself.

No amount of overly excited, probably overly intoxicated meatheads could spoil our weekend though. Megan got to see Queens Of The Stone Age. I got to see Bloc Party and Editors. The temperature was just cool enough for us to enjoy Hot Dog on a Stick (my preference is actually for cheese on a stick). Plus, we discovered the world's best lemonade. Barrett's Lemonade, from Huntington Beach, freshly squeezes a mean, pulpy drink into a sugar-lined glass. A half-hour after finishing my drink, I was still trying to scoop up lemon sugar with my straw.

After Street Scene, we knew we could never say never again when it came to summer festivals. Unbearable heat, rancid-smelling faux bathrooms and bottom barrel music fans simply do not deter from the thrill of rehashing the events to our friends who weren't there. However, on our two hour drive back to Los Angeles, I was convinced that this was my last major event of the summer (Megan was still set to cover Sounds of the Underground and Sunset Junction). I held fast to this knowledge for a few weeks, until I learned that Megan and I were going to Summer Strummer.

Unless you count KROQ's Inland Invasion, which I wouldn't since it occurred on the first day of autumn, Summer Strummer was the last hoorah for L.A. summer concert season. Despite a sudden drop in temperature the week before the event, the heat rose to its usual mid-September high that afternoon. Fortunately, we were in Santa Monica's Bergamot Station, twenty-six city blocks away from the beach, so there was a bit of a breeze and enough shady spots to get us through the day. Plus, there were multiple Barrett's Lemonade stands to keep us hydrated and a line-up featuring countless bands that we had never seen live before.

Exciting as Summer Strummer was, it still added up to a ten hour work day. Needless to say, I collapsed onto a sofa as soon as I got home. I thought, Well, at least the concerts are over until next summer. Then I remembered that I live in a state without seasons. Chances are, I'll be heading out to another all day or all weekend event with a tape recorder and sun block within a matter of weeks.

—Liz Ohanesian

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COLORING OUTSIDE

a memoir

THE LINES

by aimee cooper

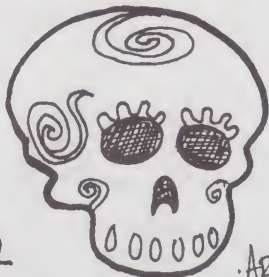
"Innocent girl befriends motley gang of fellow punks who end up turning her share house into a sea of sleeping bag-clad bodies, and eventually ends up with the honours of watching over Johnny Thunders as he passes out in her living room, and preparing a dinner party for the members of Black Flag... It's a story of how our music finds us, beating us over the head and dragging us on a soundtracked journey into life." —Logged Off, Australia

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CHICO SIMIO



No.2

ART.

MY GRANDPARENTS OWNED A HOUSE IN MEXICALI (MEXICO) THAT WAS NEXT DOOR TO THE LOCAL "PANTEON" OR CEMETARY.



THAT WAS OUR PLAYGROUND WE RAN AND JUMPED, PLAYED TAG AND HIDE & SEEK. WE WEREN'T AFRAID, THOUGH MY GRANDMA WOULD TELL ME THE "MUERTOS" WOULD GRAB MY FEET IF I STEPPED ON THE GRAVES.

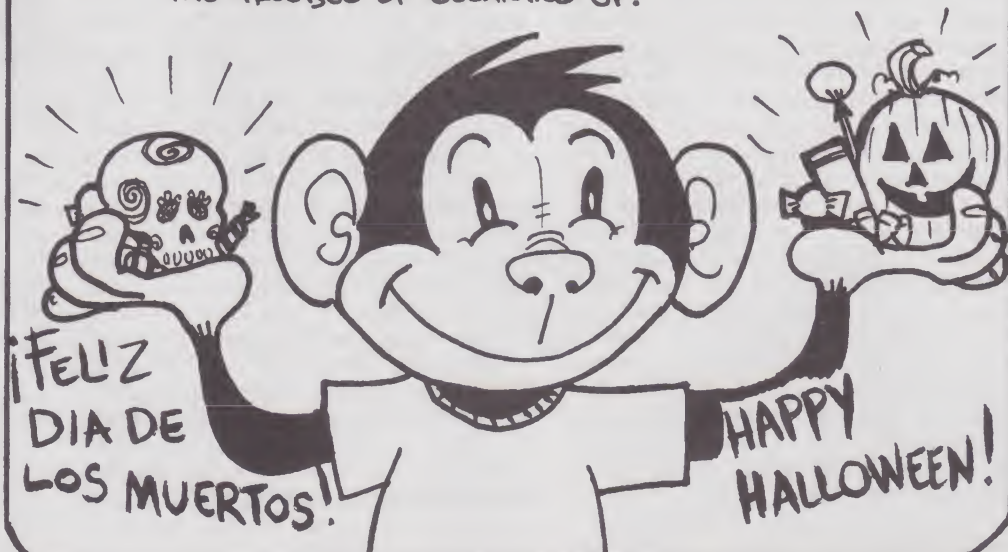


I ALWAYS WATCHED WHERE I STEPPED.

OUR FAVORITE DAY OF THE YEAR WAS "DIA DE LOS MUERTOS". EVERYONE WOULD LEAVE GOOD FOOD AS OFFERINGS FOR THE "MUERTOS".



I'M SURE THE PEOPLE KNEW WE WERE TAKING SOME OF THE OFFERINGS, BUT MAYBE LIKE US, THEY FIGURED THE "MUERTOS" WEREN'T GONNA EAT THEM. PLUS, WE SAVED THEM THE TROUBLE OF CLEANING UP.





LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"That's what's left
of New Orleans:
a stump."**

New Orleans: One Year Later

Eighty percent. That's the number that most people can't get their heads around. When Hurricane Katrina swept into New Orleans and caused Lake Pontchartrain to overflow and the levee to break, eighty percent of the city was inundated with floodwater. Eighty percent of New Orleans is equal to five Manhattans. Imagine five Manhattans underwater for three weeks. Forget Manhattan. Eighty percent of *anything* is a lot. If you lost eighty percent of your house, would you still live in it? Or to put it another way, if you lost eighty percent of your leg, would it look like a leg? Function as a leg? Would you even think of the remaining stump as a leg? That's what's left of New Orleans: a stump.

It's too much. The scope of the damage is too massive for the imagination to process. You need evidence, but the magnitude of the devastation is too large for photographs. You'd have to walk through a gallery for days. It's even too big for television. How many hours of Spike Lee's documentary can one take before emotion (anger, sadness, despair, all are appropriate) trumps comprehension?

To understand the depth and breadth of the destruction to the Crescent City, you have to go there, see it with your own eyes. Only after you've driven through the parishes and walked the streets can you even begin to approach the catastrophe. You need to see the dingy yellow line that marks the water level. You need to navigate the streets using the hand-made street signs nailed to telephone poles. You need to hear the frustration in a homeowner's voice as she explains that her plans to rebuild will have to wait until the city can identify and then locate the owner of the house that's sitting on top of her house. You need to understand that entire neighborhoods have been turned into ghost towns and the people who used to live there are scattered all over the country. Then and only then are you equipped to rebut your friend or coworker who wonders aloud why New Orleans' recovery is taking so damn long or why we should care that the New Orleans Saints are playing football in the Superdome again.

Last August, I went to New Orleans for the anniversary of Katrina. I visited with

friends whose home was one of the few spared by the floods, but were evacuated nonetheless. Their house is located directly across from City Park, close to the center of the city. Everything between the park and the sea was flooded, and many, if not most, of the neighborhoods are abandoned still.

Several years ago, I had an opportunity to explore a place very few people know about, a place that has become very special to me. So when the hurricane hit, my first thought was for my friends and their family, and my next concern was for a museum unlike any other in the world. Like most places in New Orleans, the National World War II Museum was severely impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Located on relatively high ground in the city's Warehouse District southeast of the Superdome, the museum occupies an old brewery that has survived over a hundred years of bad weather. The museum's roof held up during the hurricane and the museum was spared the devastating floods that destroyed so much of the city; but shortly after the hurricane passed and winds died down it found itself under attack from looters.

You're probably thinking to yourself, why is New Orleans, the place for jazz, Mardi Gras, and flashing hooters, the home of the National World War II Museum?

The answer is complicated one, but it starts with an Irish-American boat builder named Andrew Higgins. Higgins was a large, hard-drinking, chain-smoking son of Irish immigrants who grew up in the bayou. Boats were his business and he made his living making boats for oil companies who needed shallow-draft boats that could navigate the swamps and handle the high seas. They also had to be fast, not because they necessarily needed to be but Higgins knew that oilmen are a competitive breed who'd want their boat to be faster and louder than the next guy's. Higgins delivered.

When the United States entered the war, it had almost no boats capable of launching the invasion of Europe that Roosevelt had in mind. After all, Europe was completely over-run by the Nazis and our best ally was the island nation of Great Britain. If the U.S. was going to conquer Europe, we would have to do so by sea.

This was a huge problem for the Navy. Not only did they not have enough boats, they didn't have the right watercraft for the job. When a standard board landed on the shore, the soldiers had to climb over the gunwales of the boat, leaving themselves vulnerable to fire. Anyone who has made the transition from dock to boat knows it can be a dicey proposition under the best of circumstances. Add a heavy surf and intense fire, and you have a recipe for disaster. In fact, it was not unheard for soldiers loaded down with heavy equipment to loose their footing in the surf and drown.

Enter Andy Higgins. The brash, loud-talking New Orleans native came up with a design that could be used to quickly deliver personnel and their equipment to the beach. He designed an amphibious boat that could carry thirty-six men or 8,000 pounds of equipment and equipped it with a ramp so that when they hit the beach the men could run out three abreast in combat ready positions. The Navy wasn't convinced the design could work and denied Higgins the contract. But Higgins wasn't one to take no lying down, especially when he knew he was right. He dogged the Navy folks every chance he got until they finally agreed to consider his boat.

On the day of the demonstrations, the weather on Lake Pontchartrain was particularly rough with high, choppy seas. Higgins's LCVP (landing craft vehicle, personnel) outperformed the Navy's boats, which nearly capsized in the heavy surf, and Higgins Industries was awarded the contract.

But the Higgins story doesn't end there. Higgins was now faced with the challenge of meeting the Navy's huge demand. Higgins did what many companies in the '40s did, by hiring women and minorities, but he, the far-thinking entrepreneur, took it a step further by paying women and blacks the same wage he would pay a white man, which was a very unusually thing in the early '40s. Over the course of the war, Higgins Industries built over 20,000 boats.

The Higgins boats got their biggest test during Operation Overlord, a.k.a. D-Day, when hundreds of LCVPs and LCMs (the soldiers simply called them Higgins boats) stormed the beaches of Normandy, prompting



You need to navigate the streets using the hand-made street signs nailed to telephone poles.

Eisenhower to announce that Andy Higgins was the man who won the war.

This is where the story of the National War World II Museum takes a turn. Without the man Eisenhower was talking about, D-Day would have never happened, and without the man Eisenhower was talking to, the museum would never have been built.

Eisenhower made these famous remarks not when he was general, but much later when he was President of the United States, and the man he made them to was none other than Dr. Stephen Ambrose, the late great historian and author or dozens of history books, many of which were made into films, including *Band of Brothers*. Ambrose was working on Eisenhower's biography when the president made his now-famous remark. Ambrose was a professor of History at the University of New Orleans and was floored to learn that someone from his own backyard, so to speak, had played so pivotal a role in the liberation of Europe. Together with his close friend and colleague, Dr. Nick Mueller, the two historians dreamt of opening a history museum in New Orleans that would pay tribute to the million Americans who played a role in the Normandy Invasion. They knew they were working against the clock because more veterans were passing each year.

On the fifty-sixth anniversary of D-Day, the National D-Day Museum opened its doors to the public. Attendance rose each year and the number artifacts—both on display and in its archive—grew exponentially,

thanks in large part to its oral history program. Any veteran of WWII could make an appointment with one of the museum's historians and tell their story. They could also donate any letters, records, photos, uniforms, or souvenirs to the museum with the pledge that they would be housed safely and made available to both the family and to scholars. Congress recognized the important work the museum was doing and authorized its expansion from being the only museum that dealt with the D-Day Invasion on all fronts of the war, to the National World War II Museum covering every theater of the war. The museum undertook a massive \$282 million expansion plan.

Then disaster struck. First, Ambrose contracted cancer and passed away, leaving the museum without its leader. Then Hurricane Katrina touched down on New Orleans and just like that, everything changed.

Walking into the museum, you'd never know that a little over a year ago, the place was under siege. Thankfully, the exhibits and archives were neither damaged nor stolen, but looters ransacked the coffee shop and gift store. T-shirts and coffee machines can be replaced.

Like most art and cultural institutions, the National World War II Museum depends on tourists to stay afloat. The largesse of people like Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg are doing amazing things to ensure that there are incredible things in store for the museum—if it can stay open.

But the city of New Orleans slow recovery has kept people out of the city, right when the museum needs them most.

The National World War II Museum is not a tanks and guns kind of museum. You'll see a replica of a Higgins boat, airplanes hanging from the ceiling, and plenty of uniforms, but the museum is about stories, the trials and tribulations of ordinary Americans: men and women who drove trucks, served food, stood watch, and, sometimes accomplished amazing feats of courage.

One of the unique things about the National World War II Museum is the volunteers. Every time you walk into the museum you will find at least one World War II veteran on hand to ask you how you're doing, describe some aspect of the museum to you, and, if you're lucky, they'll talk about their experiences. Real stories. Living history. Before Katrina, there were over 300 World War veterans working as volunteers, but fewer than half have come back to New Orleans since it reopened. This is a huge loss, but an understandable one. If you were over eighty years old, would you come back to a ruined city with an uncertain future?

Dr. Mueller, who is now the museum's president, sees a lot of parallels between the rebuilding of New Orleans and the campaign against the Nazis. Both efforts were awesome tasks with a high risk of failure and enormous amount of uncertainty that could only be conquered if ordinary people pulled together and did whatever it took to get the job done.

I saw that spirit everywhere I went the short weekend I spent in New Orleans. From community rallies in the Ninth Ward, to homeowners gutting their houses while living out of FEMA trailers, to my friend's volunteer work at a school in her neighborhood. It won't be easy and it won't be pretty, but New Orleans can get back on its feet.

The best part about it is you can help just by going there. Whether it's to a football game at the Superdome or a Mardi Gras celebration in the French Quarter, every dollar you spend in New Orleans helps. If you go, just be sure you visit the National World War II Museum, and when a veteran shakes your hand and welcomes you to the museum, you'll be reminded of just how great this country can be.

—Jim Ruland





SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

"Would you buy Lover Boy by looking at that guy?"

The Fall of Tower

A few weeks ago, I read of the second filing of bankruptcy by Tower Records, and for some unknown reason it troubles me. As a teenager, I cruised the records looking for any and all forms of rock and/or roll vinyl. When I was in junior high, we would pedal our bikes up to the local mall, to a store by the name of Magic Mushroom. Yes, there was a head shop in the back. At that time period we were into Kiss, Cheap Trick, Rush, and Zeppelin. That record shop is long gone. So is the mall. Some track houses sit on that spot.

Now by the end of high school, I had gravitated to punk rock, and we had to go to independent stores, such as Lovell's in Whittier or Peer Records in Anaheim. In fact, Peer is where I got my bloodstain vinyl Misfits' *Die Die My Darling* copy after returning an Exploited album that the center paper had gotten fucked up and glued to the last song. Score! Record store no longer exists. There was also the chain Licorice Pizza where I bought a tape of the Vandals' *Peace Thru Vandalism*. After that record, we were hooked because we had never heard freedom of speech like that before. Licorice Pizza no longer is with us. My most frequented store, though, was Zed's Records in Long Beach. It was here that I would go with Jeff when he was in Visual Discrimination and later in Chorus of Disapproval. Why? Because Big Frank Harrison worked there and for a short while ran Nemesis Records on the side. I would even go to Zed's after classes in college because it was right down the street and Frank and I would go get lunch and then drive up to Signal Hill to get something from the store's warehouse; it was convenient that I had a truck. Zed's is no longer a part of Long Beach.

I guess what this all means is: where do kids get to go to hang out and hear their music? I wouldn't give up any of those memories; those were some of the best times and some of the best people ever. Hell, I still recant the story of Jeff Banks's (from Chorus Of Disapproval) run-in with the Slurpee salesman over the size of cups, and I can still see him kicking his leg back and forth across the doors' electric eye, making that ding

noise which infuriated the Slurpee guy. All this happened on the way to the record store. Good stuff!

The medium has changed from vinyl to compact disc, but there still has to be a place that one can go to find the indie stuff. For that matter, what about the store that sells used stuff? I think it will be a cold day in hell before I find some used Humpers at Best Buy. Tower is the closest store to my house that sells stuff that is off the beaten path—not way off—but heads and shoulders above Best Buy or Death Mart. I also seem to relate better to the people working at Tower than to a guy in a yellow vest who probably can't cross reference to turn me on to something new. Back in March of this year, in the *Los Angeles Times*, there was a short article titled "What I Learned at the Record Shop" and in reading it, was filled with the memories of shopping for music. I was that guy buying so many records that they left marks on my arms, clutching them for fear that some other bin rat would grab my treasure. With the smell of all that used vinyl, one would think that every record had at some time come in contact with rain. The author states that after a while, his buying habits changed and, at first, he didn't really care when two of L.A.'s famous stores, Rhino and Aaron's, closed their doors because so many of the other stores had folded with the new manner of media.

The main idea is that music is now downloaded and once again the computer is used for evil rather than good. I would find it rather bizarre to hang out with my buddies at my house by my computer listening to music. Hey, but that's just me. I would rather get off my big ass, get in my truck, grab a buddy, go to the record store, find some deal, and then go cruise some food joint and gloat about my purchase.

The other great thing about vinyl was the size. They could stick anything in the sleeve of a record and it was easier to read the lyrics. The only downfall was storing the stuff, which may be one of the reasons that the records always seemed to smell musty. This isn't to say I hate CDs; I find that getting a hard-to-find disc is the same as finding hard-to-find vinyl, but I have to find a place that is going to afford me that opportunity,

and right now that place is Tower Records. I really don't see any fun in downloading music. Sure, you can copy it to a disc, but where are the liner notes, the thank you lists, or, for that matter, the graphics? Don't you need to see what the guys/ girls look like? Would you buy Lover Boy by looking at that guy? Come on, do you think I like Lita Ford for the music? Music is not just the sound but also the visual aspect. Go to a show and at some point, close your eyes: not the same as if they were open.

I guess the record stores of the '70s and '80s are similar to the car hops of the '50s and '60s. They give us some great memories of people.

Maybe this dog has to lay down but don't tell this dog he can't keep barking.

SUBURBAN LEGENDS

\$\$?, By John Piche and Mindy Fisher

It's funny how suburban legends start and how they all seem similar. This mini comic is drawn real well but the story is pretty predictable. Lady gives birth to evil twins, something happens to father, strange things happen to pets and small children, lady supposedly kills twins, lady hangs herself without chair, ghost of lady seen through mail slot, if lady sees you, you will die within the hour. Remember the playground tale that at night if you looked in a mirror with no lights on and repeated Bloody Mary three times, she would appear and slice you up? I do, and I had several friends who had one hand on the light switch while repeating the verse. This is just the right time of the year to get this comic out with Halloween right around the corner. This is the only time of year that I would read this to the kiddies, because they will start a new legend in the neighborhood if you do. Here's the kicker: the twins aren't dead and someone sure doesn't like Cleveland or maybe Drew Carey. Once again, this is drawn well but very predictable fun for a quick read. (Love Bunni Press, 2622 Princeton Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH, 44118, undeciluna@yahoo.com)

FUNBELIEVABLE TIMES with GOAT and RESTY

\$1.00, By Mike Twohig

Goat is, of course, a goat, and Resty is a cat.



Zed Records (R.I.P.)

I was that guy buying so many records that they left marks on my arms.

Why the hell someone would put these two animals in a comic together is just plain weird. Not dumb, just weird. I guess all the other animal pairs must already be taken. I also have a hard time because these animals sometimes appear as spaceships, blimps, and other odd beings. I will admit that any fire-breathing goat that attacks President Bush isn't all that bad. One little odd comic this is. Whether or not it will appeal to the masses is another question. The only thing I take issue with is that many pages go to waste with what seems to be a reverse negative for each panel. Other than that, I kind of like this comic. I wouldn't mind seeing some further adventures. (72-1 Meadow Farm South, North Chili, NY 14514, miketwohig@hotmail.com, www.angelfire.com/ill/miketwohig)

HEE!

\$2.50, By Ivan Brunetti

Hee frickin ho ho ha! This little comic is three and a half inches square, but it is so giant when it comes to humor. I mean, I

pissed my pants when it came to the total disregard for all that is sacred in life and sex. I mean, which panel do I start with, the guy who keeps his wife locked up in the cellar in a coffin with a small window for feeding or the guy at the adoption office who asks "where do you keep the sexy ones?" This comic is filled with perverts criminals and sexaholics, and for some unknown reason, I find it hilarious. The one thing I can relate it to is Hustler comics. I mean, these characters are depraved. The author even paints himself as an out-too-late lush; really look at the last panel if you can find this little gem. If religious right groups ever find this, there is going to be a lynching. Find this book, read, laugh, and then hide it in your special place—especially if you have kids. (Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115, www.fantagraphics.com)

CRUDE DUDE COMIX #6

\$??, By Jose Angeles

Crude is right, but I think right on. There is so much philosophy in this comic who it

sometimes gets a little tedious, that and all the intestines from all the philosophers that play chainsaw basketball. The book starts with the argument of what is the interpretation of luck. We learn it when the overweight guy dives into shark-infested waters to retrieve his lucky penny. My favorite is the pissed off guy who wants to die by punching a guy so hard that they both explode, making their blood drench all the people in an infinite radius—the picture is just too damn funny. Oh, and the pissed off guy gets statues on every corner of the world with the inscription at the base: "He died fighting, not crying, because crying is fucking gay." Now that's funny! This comic is full of anger directed at the moral losers in this world—you know, the ones who you will meet two or three times a day—and it is all chronicled here in this comic. All right, that's a little overboard, but it is a funny comic and I think we should all thank Jose for letting off this steam. (joseangeles@muchomail.com, www.crudedude.net)

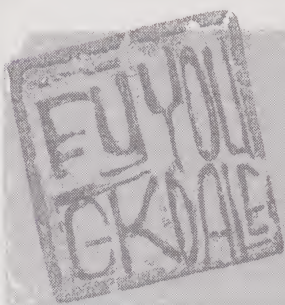
THE LOUCHE and INSALUBRIOUS ESCAPADES of ART D'ECCO

\$16.95, By Andrew and Roger Langridge

The artwork is superb and the story lines are comical, so goes the world of Art D'ecco

and his friend Gump, the pyramid shaped, Jabba the Hut roommate. The fact that they are like Oscar and Felix adds to the humor. You really want to like Art. He always wears a white tux and has sharp lines, but he's just a lying sack of crap. Gump is just a simpleton and most of the time is the ass of all that goes on. Throw in some other members of the art world, such as Kitsch or Art Nouveau, and we have the workings of bad art, forgive my pun. The only regret I have in this comic is that I had to see the mole-filled backside of Gump just before he jumped in the bath. It's drawn sometimes too well. If you do pick this title up, read through it at a leisurely pace as to get the full effect of the art nuances. If you read it in one sitting, things tend to go unseen. If this comic was in color, it would be awesome—kind of like what color did for the Tick, so find a copy and get a new grip on modern art. (www.fantagraphics.com)





MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**"Do you feel cold?
What a cold day! I
think you should put
on more clothes."**

Crazy Chinglish

Portland made me pale. I am reminded of the months of gray when I look at my milky thighs that didn't see much sun, hidden beneath beaten-up jeans. The sporadic showers that lasted nine months out of the year had me toting around my umbrella at all times.

Chinese women carry umbrellas all over town too, to protect their precious porcelain skin from darkening. While shopping for body moisturizer in the capitol city of Changsha, I spent fifteen minutes searching through aisles of skin-bleaching lotion to find two small bottles that would not Michael Jackson my ass. I came to China to get away from whitey, and here all the Chinkers wanna be like 'em. There was seemingly no escape, until I moved to Huarong, a small countryside-ish city in north Hunan province.

China is making me brown. My arms, which have seen the most sun, have been toasted a light mocha shade. The students on my campus and throughout Huarong are darker than my arms. These folks, who eek a living out beneath the sun rather than fluorescent lighting, can't afford to care about their skin tone. They're keepin' it real.

Amidst the renovation and slow development of Huarong and its heaps of construction debris, there are groups of dark-skinned men napping on shaded, bare concrete sidewalks just inches away from their line of rusted bicycles with equally rusted shovels and spades strapped to the back rack. Horse-drawn carts spot the sidewalks and old folks still haul buckets dangling from a thin board across their shoulders. As the sun sets, street vendors pack corners of busy intersections with their mobile kitchen carts and are flanked by sets of pink plastic tables and chairs just in time for dinner. Further down the road, mothers squat on the cracked sidewalk as they bathe their children in buckets besides the ubiquitous trash piles in the middle of the road, in front of our apartment building, and other random spots where its been deemed dump worthy.

Huarong is just one of the infinite number of small Chinese cities rapidly developing to catch up to the 21st Century, trading trash heaps for another mobile phone storefront.

Even with the current modernization in China, folks still be eating with sticks.

* * *

I am at the Huarong County Number One Middle School as a foreign oral English teacher, plowing through twenty classes of *Senior 2* students every week. It's the equivalent to American sophomores, with classes averaging about sixty-five kids. Every week, more than a thousand little Chinese teenagers, more than two thousand slanted eyeballs staring at me thinking one of two things, "Why won't she stop talking; I'm trying to sleep," or "How can she speak English so well?"

Initially, I was worried that the students were going to be disappointed when they saw me, someone who didn't have a three-dimensional face and blonde hair. But when they wrote down questions for me, I learned that they were in fact pretty intrigued with my yellow booty.

Most frequent:

Do you have a boyfriend? Are you married? Are you Chinese?

Can you sing a song for us?

Where were you born? (After I just told them I was born in L.A.)

My favorites:

What do you think of xiao Bush ("little" Bush)?

Do you feel cold? What a cold day! I think you should put on more clothes.

Please tell us about love.

Why did you tell us your age, age is a secret for foreigners?

What kind of man do you like best?

What is the most beautiful building in U.S.A?

When is your first love?

Do you want to be a Chinese?

How much money you have?

If Taiwan want to independent, what will you do?

Can you speak English a little more slowly?

Why are you so perfect?

What does the magazine's name mean? (Razorcake)

Why can you speak English so well?

Do you like "Punk Rock" and Green Day?

Could you recommend some rock or punk band that you like or appreciate?

* * *

A crossed-out question:
How heavy are you?

As far as teaching philosophies goes, I'm pretty kick back about the whole affair. If you want to learn English, that's awesome! If you don't care, that's cool too. I respect a student's apathy towards English because I'm no linguistic imperialist, and these poor kids are overworked as it is.

Watching them struggle through China's rigorous educational system (when it's accessible and available) gives me a newfound appreciation for my own seemingly busted, under-funded American public school experience.

The kids here are up at dawn, lined up in the basketball courts and track field to do morning exercises at six AM. The last dismissal bell rings fifteen and a half hours later at nine thirty PM, when they all return to their dormitories before a solemn horn plays though the speakers at ten fifteen PM to signal bedtime. Classes are forty-five minutes long, with eight periods where someone is talking at them and two periods of study hall where they silently complete assignment after assignment. All day, the students sit, remaining within the confines of their overloaded desks, toppling with books, with the occasional visit to the science building for experiments or to the ping-pong court for P.E. a few times a week. The teachers move from class to class. In between, there is one half-hour exercise break, two hours for lunch, and another two for supper. But even that free time is usually spent studying from their long list of things they must memorize and regurgitate. They do this seven days a week. Their one true break is on Sunday afternoons where they don't have classes for a few hours, but then they return at six thirty for more evening studying.

It's heartbreaking.

It's China. With all its 1.3 billion people and not enough universities to take them all in, the students work overtime to compete.

Even with all its efforts in development and becoming a world leader, China hasn't figured out a way to let their kids be kids.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com





the kids of
**HUARONG COUNTY
NUMBER ONE
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
(Hunan, China)

1000 Letters Project

The art of the letter is dying. With the increasing prevalence of emails, text and instant messaging, as well as message boards, no one wants to take the time to hand write and mail out a letter anymore. The written word is becoming a thing of the past. It is my wish to change this.

WELCOME TO THE 1000 LETTERS PROJECT!

HERE'S HOW to Participate:

Write a one page, one-sided letter. The page can be any size you want but the entire letter must be written on one side. The subject matter of the letter can be about anything at all and may include pictures or drawings if you wish. However, it must be hand written or typed on a typewriter. Computer printed letters will not be accepted. Please mail your letters along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the address below.

500 Letters will be collected & used in 3 ways:

1. The letters will be photocopied and used for the 1000 letters zine.
2. The original letters will be used in a month long art installation in the New York City area.

3. Most importantly, Crafty Records will release the 1000 letters CD. The CD will consist of bands that the label met while traveling on tour throughout the US. All the songs will be about letter writing.

Each CD will include one of your 500 letters sent to Crafty Records along with a SASE. The purchaser of the CD will then write a return letter, which will be written and mailed back to you. These 500 return letters along with your original 500 letters will make up the 1000 letters for the project. You will receive a letter from a perfect stranger and a letter writing partnership will be born. These letters will hopefully be the foundation of thousands of future hand-written letters brought on by this project.

PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTERS TO

1000 LETTERS PROJECT
c/o CRAFTY RECORDS
75 EARLEY STREET
BRONX, NY 10464

*Remember to include a SASE so a letter can be easily sent back to you!

THANKS -- DAN TREIBER
WWW.CRAFTYRECORDS.NET

QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?

send email to 1000lettersproject@craftyrecords.net

or better yet write me a letter to the address on the left. SEND IT AMO'S DAN

Crafty Records

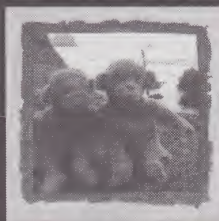
www.craftrecords.net www.craftrecords.net www.craftrecords.net



GUITAR BOMB

Back Alley Jesus

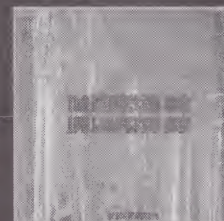
"Dirty, Gritty, Blusey Rock from the bowels of Brooklyn"



Captain Chaos

This is Cake

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of Ghostmice, Operation Clift Clavin



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MY NINETEENTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

THE COLUMN DEADLINE IS APPROACHING AND I STILL DON'T HAVE ANY GOOD IDEAS, SO I APOLOGIZE FOR THE LACK OF INSPIRATION IN THIS LIST OF...

the TOP TEN
TOP SCENES
FROM MY
FAVORITE
MOVIES!



1 THE GIRLFRIEND-SHOOTING SCENE FROM GERMAN DIRECTOR JORG BUTTGEREIT'S 1989 FILM DER TOODESKING



2 THE LAST TEN MINUTES OF SLIME CITY (1988)



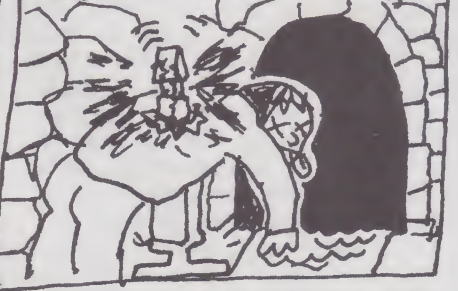
3 THE OPENING SCENE OF GHOST SHIP. THE REST OF THE MOVIE SUCKS.



4 THE LAWNMOWER SCENE FROM PETER JACKSON'S 1992 FILM DEAD ALIVE



5 THE AMAZING JACKHAMMER SUICIDE SCENE FROM THE CHURCH DIRECTED BY MICHELE SOAVI.



6 THE OPENING SCENE OF SUICIDE CLUB



7 THE TOXIC AVENGER'S BRUTAL HEAD-CRUSHING SCENE.



8 THE AWESOME PART IN ROBOCOP WHEN THE ED-209 PROTOTYPE MALFUNCTIONS AND KILLS THE EXECUTIVE.

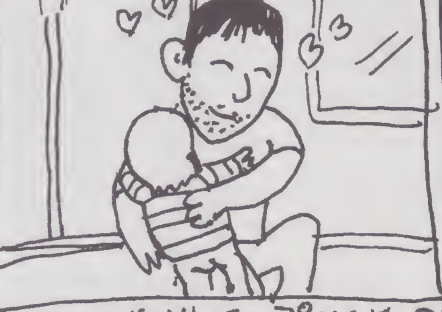


(WATCH THE CRITERION VERSION, IT'S EVEN GORIER!!)

9 THE RAZOR-WIRE ROOM IN DARIO ARGENTO'S SUSPIRIA (1977)



10 THE END OF KRAMER VS. KRAMER WHEN DUSTIN HOFFMAN WINS CUSTODY OF HIS KID.



...AS YOU CAN TELL, I'M ALWAYS LOOKING FOR GOOD COLUMN IDEAS. SEND ME YOURS! IF I USE IT I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT AND A COOL PRIZE LIKE A T-SHIRT OR SOMETHING. WOW.





LOVE, NØRB

REV. NØRB

**"All I have is the
damn sun in my
eyes and TOOL
in my ears."**

GUNS AT MY SCHOOL or HIGH SCHOOL, RAH RAH RAH

Hi! I am in a car (note Meat Puppets ref). I need my piece in to Todd by the end of the night. That will be tough. I am en route to a town, a two and a half hour drive from home. This town can't be named, but it has the state dome. I can't say the name of the town not so much 'cause it would scathe my tongue to say it, but 'cause this is writ on my lap top, which is two words (you'll see why "lap top" is two words in a bit). It is hard to write words that are good and that flow when you are in your friend's car and he has TOOL on, but i try. This is where the shtick comes in: Since this ride has so much bump to it, and the words have so little flow to them, and all is like CHOP CHOP CHOP, my plan is to write this whole deal in words of one BLEEP or less. I cannot say what the BLEEP means, but that's not 'cause it's a swear word. That is 'cause the word BLEEP is not one BLEEP, it is three BLEEPs. No good for this piece! This piece must keep all words to one BLEEP! Short words most times have just one BLEEP. Long words, they have more. The word "BLEEP" itself starts with "S.". You know the word! The start of it rhymes with "kill." The end of it sounds just like "bull." There is an "uh" sound in the mid part. You get it. THAT word. Yeah. That's my shtick for this piece. Three times ten times ten words of one BLEEP each. I mean, some dude once wrote out the key parts of Al's big thoughts in words of one BLEEP or less (you know Al—smart dude, white hair, dead now. He wrote the thing with "E" and "M" and "C" and "squared." Well, this one dude wrote out that whole thing in small words like these. That's some feat! I wish I had that piece here now; I could steal words and thoughts from that dude and look smart and bright! That is not the case, though. All I have is the damn sun in my eyes and TOOL in my ears. My friend smokes butts, the ash burns my eye like in that song from that band from Oz! Good gosh kill me now please why don't you?! Fuck dude! Well, so, yes, where were we? Oh yeah, one BLEEP or less. I don't know, it seemed like a good thought at the time (which is now), and this piece has just short words, so it should take up less space and then all are pleased! So, let's go

with this now that we know the ground rules. So, heck, i am on the way to the state cap to meet with more vid game guys. That's my job now, as i have said in times past. Not a bad way to go so far. But, no more talk of this! Let's move on! To start for real, i must quote the band called DÜ (you know that band! From the Twin Burgs to my west! Two gay guys, one guy not so gay [but looked the part]). They had this live "Land Speed" thing, it was their first full length. It had this song called "Guns at My School," which went **"WE GOT GUNS AT MY SCHOOL! WE GOT GUNS AT YOUR SCHOOL! GUNS AND KNIVES, TAKE IN LIVES, FUCK YOU!"** I cheat a bit on the quote but you know what i mean, right? Well, i'll have you know that two weeks past, some kids tried to blow up my old school! Guns and knives and lit up gas goop and bombs and shit, like those kids in the school from that square state who wore the black coats (here's a weird thing: My old squeeze back from when i was in tenth grade at that school, Green Bay East, moved to the square state, and her kids go to the same high school now that the whole first shoot the jocks thing went down in! She is some kind of bad luck charm fo' sho'). The plot was stopped by cops when kids tipped them off that some bad shit was sure to go down at school! All hands safe! The kids are now in jail! (That makes me think of a song, "I Hate the Kids" by Hank of Black Flag's old band! **"I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS!"** Hank knew his shit back then, when he was not yet in Black Flag! That's fo' sho' as well!) Of course, things like these make one think on that type of shit: It's not like the thought to do such a thing had not crossed my mind back then, ya know? (Ah, but this is not quite true: I used to think to do such things when i was of the age not quite set to go to high school. The not quite yet high school school. That was my big age to dream of the kill the kids stuff! *Yes sir!* I would lie there in bed at night, with the one real full length by that Sex Guns band with John and Sid and Paul Cook and Steve Jones to play on my head phones (which is two words as well), and i would dream of a sort of

vile rock and roll high school—but it would not be the kids bring down The Man, like in the flick "Rock 'n' Roll High School" that we all love (HERE'S A NUTS THING: I don't know if i said this in a piece in times past, but for a long time i thought that there is no way that P. J. Soles ["P. J."] is two words. *You can tell. I put a space in the midst of them so it can't be said to be wrong!* So, guns and knives, take in lives, ha, fuck you, Jack!—who played Riff, the hot girl, in "Rock 'n' Roll High School"—was, for real, named "P. J. Soles." I mean, she must have changed her name, right? You'd think so. Well, i looked it up! *P. J. SOLES WAS FOR REAL NAMED P. J. SOLES!!!* She got wed to a dude with the "Soles" last name, and her first name starts with "P" and her not first name with "J!" But, that's not the real nuts part. The real nuts part is that do you know what P. J. Soles was called when she was not wed to the Soles dude? What she was called at birth? Dig this shit: **"P. J. HARD ON!!!"** I fudge a bit with the space in the last name, but you know what i say! It's true! The hot chick in "Rock 'n' Roll High School" was born "P. J. Hard on!" That's too nuts! I dig it! [i'd still do her, though she's, you know, old {not that i'm one to talk at this point}, just 'cause FOR FUCK'S SAKE, SHE'S RIFF!!! You'd suck not to!!!)... um... where was i now? Oh yeah, like "Rock 'n' Roll High School" but not the kids bring down the man and the school, it would just be me and my like four friends, and we would bring down the man AND the school AND the kids! I would dream that i would go to school with a gun and i would, on the sly, put the Sex Guns album on the P. A.! This would sap the wills of the kids who were not us! They would sit, like a bunch of brain dead saps (hell, they WERE a bunch of brain dead saps! Fuck you, brain dead saps! I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS! I HATE THE KIDS!), and i would whip out a gun and pick them off as i pleased! **BLAM!** Fuck you! **BLAM!** Eat my shit! **BLAM!** Suck a dead cow's dead dick you dead cow dick suck fuck head!!! The thing by the Sex Guns would play, and i would GO OFF on those fucks! With a gun! **God Save The Queen! Eat hot lead and shit**



Illustration by Terry Rentzepis

Have i sold out, or did i just choose the wrong side to start with?

like that! **New York!** Die fuck head die! **E!** Blam! **M!** Blam! **I!** Blam! (who?) **E!** Blam! **M!** Blam! **I!** Blam! Blam! Blam! I would move thru the class rooms, kill all the kids in one, go kill the kids in the next! **We mean it, maaaaaan!** I would go find my like four friends, go to the room where they had class that day, let them know what was up! They would pull out drums or those things with six strings, they could rock out and play the Sex Guns tunes while i shot all the kids! We would move thru all the rooms! No one would know what hit them! **Fuck this and fuck that!** The rooms would pile up with dead fuck head ninth grade kids! None could find a place we were not! **Lie lie lie lie lie! You lie lie lie lie lie! Tell me why, tell me why, why'd you have to lie?** The whole school would be piled with the dead! We would step on a corpse to ROCK with our fists in the air! Fuck you corpse! We would rule the school, 'cause we would have bumped off all the fucks that gave us shit, which was, more or less, all the fucks (we just

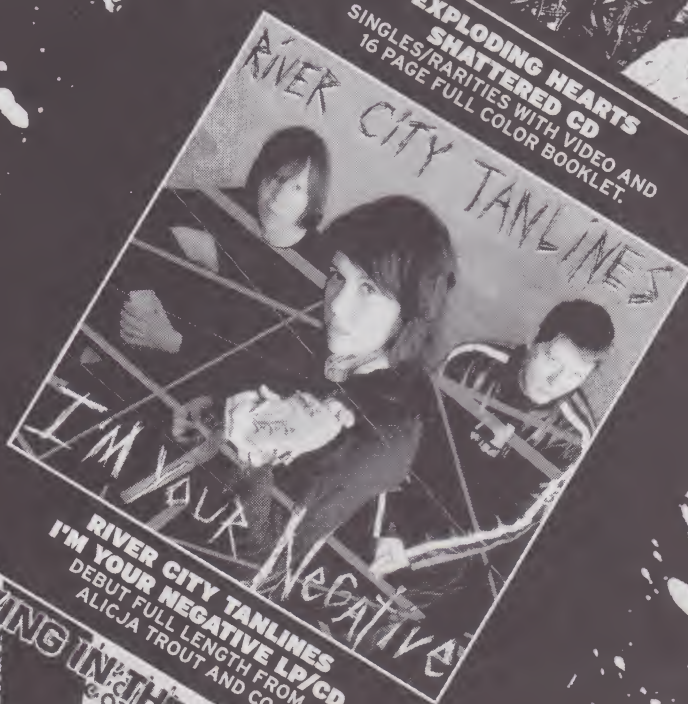
stopped to eat. I could not get out of the mode that i am in. Would just speak in words like this. What the fuck, why not. Now i am back in the car with more TOOL in my ears. The road here goes BUMP BUMP BUMP. The screen goes BOING! BOING! BOING!, back and forth; it is hard for me to write this shit. Plus i checked my juice, my juice is LOW! I am half done and my juice is half gone! GONE, DAD, GONE! LOVE IS GONE! [Fuck you Femmes, you want some of this?] I can't go back to fix stuff well 'cause it's too hard to aim shit. Please try to cope! Yes, i must write the rest at the same pace as the first half because if i slack at all, the juice will die 'fore the piece is writ! Whoa would that suck! Todd would lose faith. Got to get this done! O. K. back to work!). Yes, all would be dead. The five of us would reign, big time! We'd rock out front, on a pile of the dead! We would turn the hot girls to head slaves, they would give us blows 'cause we would be KINGS OF ALL WE SAW and they like that kind of

thing, or so it seemed at the time. But, yes, all would be dead, save my friends and some girls we'd leave to suck our dicks. That all seemed so vile and nuts and cool and, of course, PUNK back then, now a days you look back and think "hmm...that's kind of fucked up, ain't it?" Some kids try to blow up your school (not just my school, but Monk's [he has a show on the boob tube now] old school, too! Yup, Monk went to my school. Cool, huh?) and you think, "what the fuck is wrong with you fucked up scuzz bags? How can you be such a bunch of gross lame fucks? What's wrong with you pukers?" So now i sit and think, well, was i wrong to dream of the whole "kill all the kids who aren't my friends and make the hot girls suck my dick" thing? 'Cause, i mean, that sure seemed to be the right thing to dream of at the time. It was, like, the MAIN THING OF PUNK to me, to dream to kill all the lame dudes and make the girls do my bid (as Stiv said). The whole teen age day dream of death and sex and rock and roll

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and shit! So, now i look back, and go yikes!—what vile shit was once dreamt up by me back then!—how can this be squared, now that i am more old and wise? How can it all make sense, what i thought then, when now that folks try and do in real life what i used to just dream of when i would jerk off (or what EV, ya know), i look at it and think “how fucked up!” It’s sort of a mess. Does punk just play at crap? It is all a pose? Am i just old? Was i wrong to dream of the kill all the kids thing back then, or am i wrong to wash my hands of it now that i’m old? Have i sold out, or did i just choose the wrong side to start with? ‘Cause, i mean, those dudes who were of a mind to blow up my school don’t seem cool at all to me, they seem like dudes with an “L” on their heads. Yet, back when i was in high school, people thought that i was a dude with an “L” on my head, so who am i to talk? It may be that i should just shut the fuck up! O. K., shit, i don’t have much juice left! I’ve got to make this count! I got to type like mad! My hands are cold! The screen wags back and forth! What a bunch of fucked up shit! Who thought of this lame shtick, man? Some god damn fuck wad!!! So, then, re: high school, i saw my old Lit teach last month—and she was DRUNK!!! I mean, she was DRUNK AS FUCK!!! I saw her at the beer store, so I should talk, but she was FUCKED UP AS SHIT!!! She slurred her words. She went to get more wine!!! You have to know her. She was one god damn stuck up bitch!!! We would

have shot her first!!! When me and my friend Gare (who was in S. U. M. with me at that point) first had her for class, she was like “who wants to put up some kind of stuff on the big board on the back wall of class? You know, some nice Lit themed stuff, things like that? Who will do so?” She knew not with whom she dealt! We raised our hands. “We’ll do it, Miss A!” She’s like, “oh great! I can’t wait to see what you boys come up with.” We’re like MMM BWAH HA HA HAAAAAAA!!! She thinks we’re apt to do some crap like “*It is great to read good books! Read some now if you would be so kind!*”—put a big ol’ sign like that up on the board in the back of the room. Me and Gare, we have plans that do not quite match up with hers. We go to Gare’s house, and I bring the front thang of the fourth full length by that band who was in “Rock ‘n’ Roll High School” (you know—Joe, John, Dee and Tom [at that point Mark]. “One-two-three-four” and all like that). We draw up a HUGE “Road To Ruin” front art thing! It brings awe! We cut out the word parts in red, each as big as a full sheet: R, A, M, O, N, E, S. Then we bring this shit to school. We get to class, and it is time for all the kids to be shhhhhh and read. We say “Miss A, we’ve got our stuff. May we put it up?” We say this in a quite sweet tone. She’s like “Yes, boys, you go do so, you quite bright and nice boys, you!” We put up the “Road to Ruin” thing, it’s like the whole wall of the class room. She damn near shits a brick. It was great. In the

long run, that might have been more cool than to kill all of the kids, but, then, i am not sure. “Don’t speak too soon ‘cause the wheel’s still in spin,” as Bob D. said. But, yes, we were not so much on her good side post that stunt. But we did not care. She once told us that we must learn Lit, ‘cause we will some day have good jobs (we were in smart kid Lit class), or we would—and get this—WED those who have good jobs. And, as such, we would go to cock tail things (it looks like she knew quite a bit more of these cock tail things than we thought at the time) and folks would speak of this great LIT of which we all must know. And, she went on, we would want to have read this LIT not so much ‘cause it was great, but ‘cause if we did not, we would sound dumb at cock tail things. Think of this: Lit was said to be key by her ‘cause it would give us small talk to make with snobs like her (and like she thought we would turn out to be) at dumb fetes. What the fuck, that’s the worst shit i’ve heard from a teach in my damn life! Fuck you ya stuck up bitch! If we were in charge we’d shoot you first or save you for last, one of the two. Well, to end this, this ol’ bird was DRUNK OFF HER ASS when I saw her. All of which makes me think: When she taught us in school, did she dream of the day she would come to school and shoot US? Think on that, if you want.

Love,
Nørb



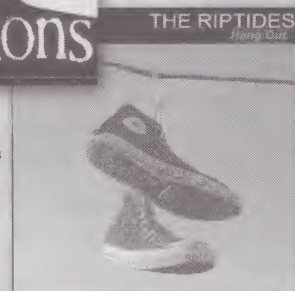
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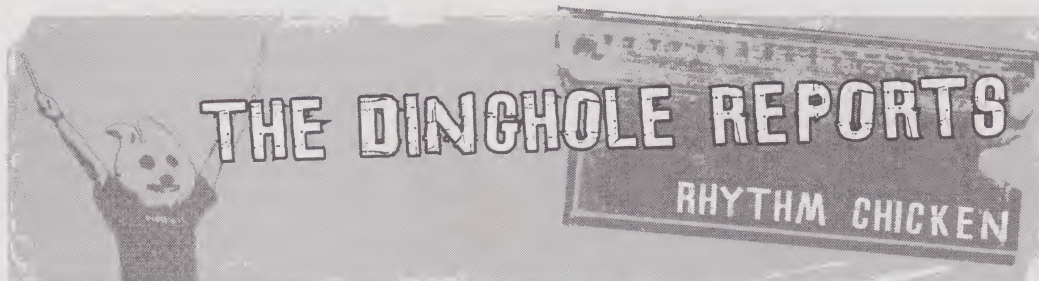


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**"A wire brush
to society's
dinghole!"**

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The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

Work, work, work. Almost every email I've sent in the last three months has included these words. When I returned to America last spring, my bank account got back down into the double digits. With my unpaid debts, it was actually in the negative triple digits. It took me a few weeks of working to get it back above the zero mark. The rest of my summer was squandered working seventy-plus hour weeks at two different jobs, and this continues now into the fall. The tourist season here will last for one more month, and then I can catch my breath.

My only real break from this self-induced labor sentencing was my twenty-four-hour trip to Milwaukee to play in a parade (see last issue). Other than that, my summer belonged to my employers. All work and no ruckus makes for a somewhat disheartened Chicken. I was missing some quality punk rock shows in Green Bay and Milwaukee because of my life-stealing jobs up here in Door County (Wisconsin's erect wang of a peninsula into Lake Michigan). My punk rock levels have rarely been lower. The only album to trip my trigger lately has been *Besterberg: The Best of Paul Westerberg*, so you KNOW I'm in a dire state! I thought it was soul-crushing to miss the Marked Men in Green Bay a few months back, but the worst humiliation was missing one of my all-time favorite bands a few weeks ago. Fuckin' DEVO played in a TENT at the CASINO on the Oneida Reservation near Green Bay! What was I doing that night? I was kissing Chicago tourists' asses for higher tips. I'm a pathetic whore of a Chicken. Just behead me, pluck me, and fry me up before I sink lower!

[Indeed, Mr. Chicken. You've been quite absent since your return stateside. — Dr. S.]

The last two months went by completely lacking in ruckus, while I continued to whore myself to two time clocks. Meanwhile, this issue's deadline was rapidly approaching and

I had nothing to write about! Having no new naturally occurring ruckus to cover, I had to synthesize some deadline-induced chaos just to gain dinghole-reportable material. Still mildly perplexed on the ethical implications of such ruckus, I decided my schedule could only allow a narrow time frame for this year's TELEPHONE TOUR!

(HOLY SHIT! You did another TELEPHONE TOUR? Why were we not informed? Why were we not CALLED? — F.F.)

You two slick-slacks haven't been stopping by lately, so Ruckus Thomas and I conducted this year's telephone tour by ourselves right here from the trailer. As for including your numbers with this year's tour stops... uh, talk to my agent.

Dinghole Report #75: If You'd Like to Make a Call, Please Hang Up and Try Again. If You Need Help, If You Need Help, If You Need Help, If You Need Help...

(Rhythm Chicken sighting #377)

Ah yes! The telephone tour! What an amazing concept! One can tour the entire country, coast to coast, right from your own home! No traffic hassles! No flat tires! No getting your equipment stolen! No driving fifteen hours to a cancelled gig! No stinky van vapor making your eyes water! Every time someone picks up the phone on the other end of the line, you are playing to a live audience! Every time their machine or voice-mail answers, it's a live bootleg recording! If you don't like a particular gig, you hang up!

This last Saturday I only had to work one shift at one job; a rarity this summer. Ruckus Thomas came over and headed straight for the icebox for a can of Hamm's. He was this tour's MC and had to lube up his delivery. This year's telephone tour intro was as follows:

Hello. My name is Ruckus Thomas and I'm calling you from the Rhythm Chicken's living room in Sister Bay, Wisconsin. Your phone number has been chosen as a tour stop in his "Telephone Tour 2006." Thanks to this country's swell telephone network, you can

enjoy the Chicken's ruckus from wherever we've reached you. First the wheel, and then THIS! I tell you, technology's on a roll! Okay, less hooshwash and MORE RUCKUS!

The intro was then drowned out by my intense ruckus rhythms, nearly melting the phone lines! Ruckus Thomas was right there, in the line of fire, holding up my cordless phone and taking the audio beating so folks could hear my ruckus from Los Angeles, Kansas City, Milwaukee, New York, Manitowoc, Washington DC, West Palm Beach, Alaska, Minneapolis, Atlanta, Austin, Green Bay, Detroit, Ephraim, and Sister Bay! In two short hours I transmitted my molten hot ruckus to thirty different locations across North America! My Sam's Club calling card was ON FIRE! Technology is indeed on a roll! This is the modern world!

Here is a listing of all thirty tour stops.

256-6563	581-0570	367-2514
691-6513	521-8587	453-8193
587-2007	907-2077	817-7018
259-3501	514-5319	249-1464
968-0609	494-2557	490-9080
719-3800	489-7390	898-2976
588-2592	224-3686	455-6353
832-9045	481-6040	242-6691
350-1076	954-1884	481-2274
854-4044	482-3346	421-1121

I have omitted the area codes to protect these lucky folks from you, the reader.

(Hey, Alexander Graham Chicken. What in the heck is that list of random numbers supposed to mean to us? This is crazy. I ain't buyin' it. — F.F.)

[Surely, Mr. Chicken, you don't expect this fabricated ruckus to keep us content. Even for your biggest fan, it would take a leap of faith to swallow this unnatural hooshwash. — Dr. S.]

I can see it will take a more detailed account of my tour to keep you two happy. Okay. Well, the only folks who actually answered their phones were Todd Taylor, Art Fuentes, Mike Faloon, Byron Collum,



Ruckus Thomas records the tour.

Yeah, Chicken-nuts! You're sitting there in your germ-free bubble, taunting folks with your mild-ass rhythms OVER THE PHONE!

Rebekka Federer, Ruckus O'Reily, Allison Vroman, Bob Schwarz, and Jerry Frisque. Of these nine lucky folks, eight of them enjoyed pure live audio ruckus. Jerry Frisque hung up on me! What a wily fella! The tour's only cancelled gig. Among those who acquired their own live bootleg recording were Paddy, Designated Dale, Russell Lichter, Maddy Tight Pants, Replay Dave, Ben Snakepit, Eric Axelson, and Lord Kveldulfr. The line at San Pedro's 4th Street Punk House was busy during two separate calls, making this gig merely postponed. The number for Toys-That-Kill-Todd must've been an old one because some elderly lady kept answering in his stead, unless she's the new Recess Records secretary. Toby Tober was the only one whose phone rang forever, no answer. Was he in the shower? Was he tied up to a chair while burglars pillaged his girlie half-shirt collection?

My favorite tour stop was calling Mr. Bob Schwarz, my old boss in Milwaukee. Halfway through Ruckus Thomas' intro spiel Bob interrupts with, "What's 2nd prize?" Then, after his personal tour stop was complete, he called Ruckus Thomas' cell phone and listened to the next tour stop through that! HE WAS FOLLOWING THE TOUR!

[Pardon me, Rhythm Chicken, but this ruckus report really sounds rather tame. In fact, I would say it's really rather LACKING in ruckus. I mean really. What we have here is you sitting in your living room, calling mild acquaintances, and playing your drums for a few seconds, then hanging up. No wrestling, no confrontation, no physical chaos. You're at such a safe distance from your audience that I would say you might even be AFRAID of them. Is this the case? Not only have you physically removed yourself from Wisconsin's punk scene, now you are trying to regain contact by performing OVER THE PHONE? If I can't accuse you of being afraid of your audience, then I can at least accuse you of being LAZY! -Dr. S.]

(Yeah, Chicken-nuts! You're sitting there in your germ-free bubble, taunting folks with your mild-ass rhythms OVER THE PHONE! You don't got the GUTS to play to peoples' faces anymore, do you?! -F.F.)

Listen, Francine, if you could see my living room, you certainly wouldn't refer to it as a "germ free bubble." If I had the TIME to take my ruckus to the people, believe me,

I would! Until I DO get the time, my adoring public is gonna have to settle for long distance ruckus via the phone lines. Now where's my coffee?

(This is all too weird. You're giving in to the man. A REAL Rhythm Chicken would quit both jobs and let ruckus rule! A REAL Rhythm Chicken would take a wire brush to society's dinghole! A REAL Rhythm Chicken would live by the laws of ANARCHY... yeah, that's what I said! A REAL Rhythm Chicken would slam a couple pitchers of Hamms and bodyslam the... (pause) wait a minute. You said Ruckus Thomas went straight for the icebox and opened a Hamms. You never mentioned any beer consumption by YOURSELF! This is surely odd. I mean what kind of Rhythm Chicken attempts to rock out the ruckus without a quality supply of Vitamin B(eer) flowing through his veins, not to mention his

BEAK! What's up, Chicken-nuts? You on the wagon or something? -F.F.)

I assure you my ruckus rhythms were indeed chaotic! My thunder was deafening! Those phone lines were NEAR MELTING!!!

[Non sequitur, Señor Chicken. Tell us straight up. Did you have cheap beer in your system or didn't you? -Dr. S.]

I would like to use this time to remind you all that I still have copies of my live 45/ DVD for sale! Just email me and we'll cluck out a deal! Stay tuned for more madcap Chicken merch!

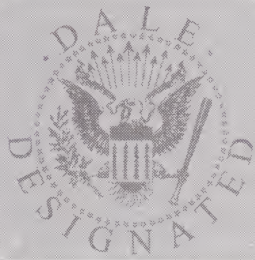
(You're not answering us, Chicken! WERE YOU DRINKING BEER OR WEREN'T YOU? -F.F.)

I... I... well, I... you see it's like... uh...

{Hello Razorcake readers. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the Rhythm Chicken's new Dell Latitude D600 laptop computer. I have been equipped with a personalized chicken-preservation program to save his feathery tail should he ever be logically cornered and unable to peck his way out with his pea-sized Chicken brain. Please tune in next time for more crazy adventures with your favorite superhero and mine, the Rhythm Chicken. Any questions you may have can be readily answered by emailing rhythmchicken@hotmail.com. Logging off. -D600}

-Rhythm Chicken





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

**BIG
DRILL
CAR**

DANCE FUCKERS

It goes without saying that anyone who's reading this magazine (and who writes for said zine) has accumulated a decent number of bands that have become prominent fixtures of their music libraries and/or collections. And these aren't the bands that you or your pals bust out every few months or so. No, these are the bands that have dug themselves a place permanently into your head and heart, the same way if you took a scratch-awl and etched your top handful of bands into your eardrum lining. The unconditional love of that special music that won't be undone by any other human being's opinion, heckling, or assorted runnings of the mouth. Sticks and stones syndrome, big time. I mean, most of us could give two shits about what some yammering putz has to say about something that has become an important part of our lives, like music. If anything, all that hot air reinforces the realization that you honestly like what you like, you're gonna continue to stand by it, and *fuck* you very much.

This goes for all genres of the musical spectrum, and I'm completely aware that there's some out there that don't take their top-ranked tuneage as serious as the next fan. But when it comes to the punk rock, I've noticed for a long time that there are a lot of folks who have the mother's grip on those particular bands that float their boat like yours truly. Not to sound like Jack Black's character in the film *High Fidelity* (which is pretty funny if you haven't viewed it yet), but I too have a "top" list of my own bands I'm partial to that's weathered the storm of speculation for many a year. But, as explained a few sentences ago, I'm the captain of my own ship, I'm at the helm, and anyone who doesn't see fit can walk the plank with my foot in their ass. Arr! Avast, ye of the arsehole persuasion! Ahem... anyway, one band I've been partial to for many years is definitely one of the best reasons to go get your rock on. I'm speaking of the almighty Big Drill Car.

Anyone who's a fan knows exactly what I mean when I say that BDC brought it, whether it was laying down tracks in a recording studio or taking charge of a stage like the way it's supposed to be taken—like you fucking *mean* it. I'm not exaggerating

when I say that only a few handfuls of bands have knocked my dick in the dirt over the years, and seeing BDC for the first time for me is right up there when I first caught the Ramones and Motörhead. Yes, they were *that* great live, cocko, and upon getting my hands on their first recordings the day after that gig, I instantly became a ginourmous fan. There are a small number of bands that fall together almost too easily, that "perfect chemistry" thing you hear about every so often. BDC were one of those bands whose chemistry played a major part in writing and recording some of the best stuff to grace mom and pop record shelves in the late '80s through the mid '90s.

Back in the mid '80s, guitarist Mark Arnold was honing his chops in the band No Crisis, alongside his buddy and bandmate Kurt Mosher. Incidentally, I never knew that this was the same Kurt who performed briefly with Social Task, the infamous all-star band who lurked around garage parties in the Huntington and Long Beach area in So. Cal. around '79-'80 (thanks for the bit o' info, Chris!). Enter Frank Daly, the teen bass player who had been living around the Costa Mesa area (also in So. Cal.) after moving out from the East Coast. Mark bumps into Frank at a record shop, they get to talking, and then get together to jam to see what happens. Shit starts grooving and the band Raw Material starts to mutate. Soon after, another band is on the hunt for a new bass player, and Frank's offered the slot. Accepting the offer, Frank sets out on tour as the new bassist for MIA. After returning from tour, Frank gets Mark into the fold and the band records the final MIA record, *After The Fact* on Flipside Records in 1987. The two of 'em start to tool around once again with a side project, including Frank's old high school buddy Bob Thomson on bass this time around, Frank solely on vocals, and Mark on guitar. MIA finally splits up in 1988, the Arnold/Daly/Thomson hybrid permanently adds drummer Danny Marcroft to the roster, and the seedlings of what's to become Big Drill Car is quickly on its way to fruition.

Now, here's where that band chemistry comes into play. The brilliant songwriting

amongst the band is flowing like corn through a goose, and between Frank's powerhouse melodies barreling outta his pipes, Mark's power chords and guitar leads that twist in and out of each song like a serpent, Bob's Steve Harris-meets-Cliff Burton bass playing (who're *they*? Look it up, asshole), and Danny's punk rock Bonham chops, there was no band at the time that could follow 'em on the same bill and top 'em. Well, I take that back—there was one instance at the Hollywood Palladium when BDC opened for the Ramones in '91 or '92. Talk about a show! It was the 'Car, Body Count (Ice T! Cop Killaaaa!), and the Ramones.

Back to the beginning of things, the guys get into a studio and bang out *Small Block*, the six-song EP that's released on their own Variet! label in 1988. The press on this vinyl was pretty low, in the 1000-2000 copies range, so if you have or come across a Variet! version of this EP, you know what to do. Touring commences around this time, and the 'Car crosses paths with The Doughboys. Cruz Records, the subsid run by Greg Ginn's SST label, gets wise and signs BDC just in time for the recording of their 1989 masterpiece full length, *Album Type Thing, Tape Type Thing, or CD Type Thing*, depending on which format you bought at the store. More touring ensues, Cruz re-releases *Small Block* in 1990, and people are getting saavy to what BDC is bringing to the plate, especially the Descendents and ALL crowds. This makes sense, as Stephen Egerton sat at the control board on all four of their studio offerings, along with Bill Stevenson on their last two.

I used to laugh at the Descendents/ALL fans that would get their panties in a bunch, claiming that BDC was lifting from these two outfits. The way I see it, there's always been some influence in BDC's tunes, but never an outright lifting of the Descendents or ALL (which is basically the Descendents sans Milo to begin with). I still think that BDC rocked it harder, the same way The Who rocked it harder than The Beatles. Both bands are exceptionally great, but The Who and BDC had bigger, sharper teeth and cajones the size of avocados. Like I said earlier, they *brought* it.



Illustration by Rafael Avila

The *Batch* LP was recorded in 1991 (with an outstanding version of Devo's "Freedom of Choice"), and the 'Car does a states tour and set their touring sights on Europe, where they're welcomed with open arms during their dates there. A live LP, *Toured* is released on BDC's new label, Headhunter/Cargo in 1993, recorded from their 1991 Batch tour at CBGB. And while it's not their most impressive live set caught on tape, it's a fond farewell to bassist Bob Thomson who left the band to join (gulp) Xtra Large and is replaced by all-around nice guy/world surfer Darrin Morris. Danny Macroft leaves the drum throne soon after the demos are recorded for the upcoming new album and is replaced with ex-Carnival Art drummer Keith Fallis. The band then re-enters the studio to record what's to be their fourth and final record, *No Worse for the Wear*. Keith then splits back to New Mexico

and ex-Cadillac Tramp Jamie Reidling hops on the drum kit.

My good friend and old bandmate Clint Weinrich (AKA, The Torrez) was fortunate enough to share stages on the last half of BDC's final states tour with Guttermouth (who he was playing bass for at the time). Clint said the best part of that tour was getting to watch the 'Car every night, the lucky bastard, but he was down with BDC for years as well, so I was stoked for him.

BDC put out a fair amount of singles, as well as recorded cuts for some comps, and quite a bit of 'em were cover songs. There's the fantastic BDC version of Cheap Trick's "Surrender" (that was played at almost every gig I saw from when they pressed that 7"), Billy Joel's "Big Shot", The Buzzcock's "I Don't Mind", Hüsker Dü's "Celebrated Summer", and even the obscure David Bowie cut "Black Country Rock."

Aside from picking up their EP and three full-lengths, I can't encourage enough any and all BDC fans to track down the singles that the band put out. They're well worth the trouble of hunting down, and besides the cover tunes, there's a handful of non-LP tracks that were never released otherwise. A hell-a-good reference to check out is St. Louis Sam's extensive BDC website at www.bigdrillcar.com.

Over fifteen years ago, I met one of my best friends (Mr. Glenn Ancheta) out in Houston, TX through an old Flipside classified ad for BDC traders. Glenn would trek out here to Los Angeles as much as humanly possible to record and videotape BDC gigs and crash out at my place (by the way, Glenn and Kevin's label, Itchy Korean Recordings, is soon to be releasing a BDC tribute compilation in the near future called *And They'll Spin... A Tribute to Costa Mesa's Finest, Big Drill Car*. Keep your eyes peeled to www.itchykorean.com for current updates). We both got to know Frank and Mark pretty well over the next couple years, and they're both stand-up guys (Hola, Señor Arnold y Daly! And Bob or Danny—if you're reading this, get ahold of me—it'd be cool to hear from the both of ya!)

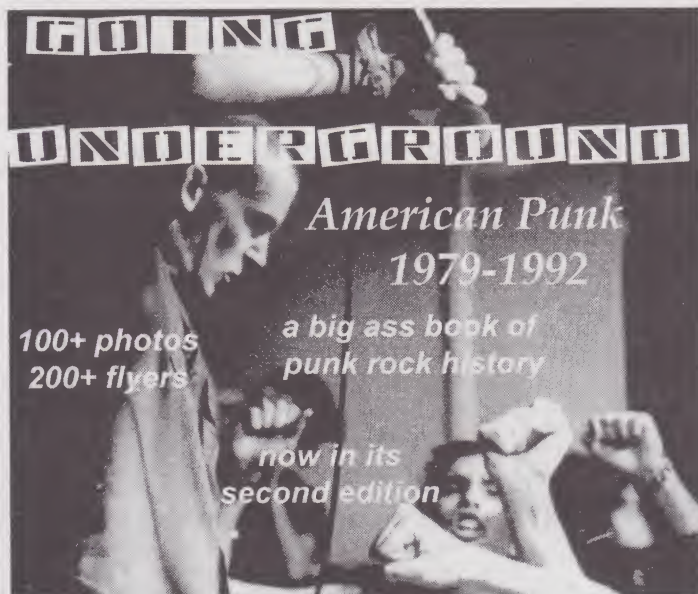
My old Flipside cohort and friend Martin McMartin was a huge fan of the 'Car, as well, and we always had the ongoing joke of who was gonna get signed first—Green Day or Big Drill Car? Even though you know how that one ended, I have to share a story that I'll never forget that Glenn told me the next day after a gig he had come out here for that I couldn't make for some reason or another. The show included Green Day, BDC, and a new opening act called Rancid at the Whisky here in L.A. Glenn says he was hanging out upstairs at the club, catching up with assorted members of the 'Car, when Billie Joe Armstrong peeked his head into the dressing room door and said something to the fact of, "Hey, you're Big Drill Car! It's cool to be playing with you guys tonight!" Green Day got signed not too long after, and it made me feel good that even though BDC never got their way-overdue comeuppance with the major labels, it was a tad comforting to know that someone else who *got* what BDC was about had managed to snag the inevitable record deal. I'll never forget that story.

Besides digging a band like Big Drill Car for almost half my life (with all the packed gigs and spinning those records literally hundreds of times), you can see that they're they waaay up there with my top ten when it comes to Dale's special area (my top music faves, not where I pee, you pervs). Even cooler, I've met some rad people along the way and made some pretty kick-ass friends, to boot. Let's see someone's stamp collection do that.

I'm Against It

-Designated Dale





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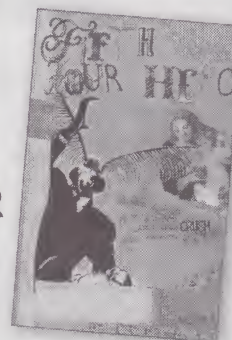
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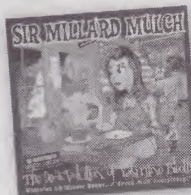
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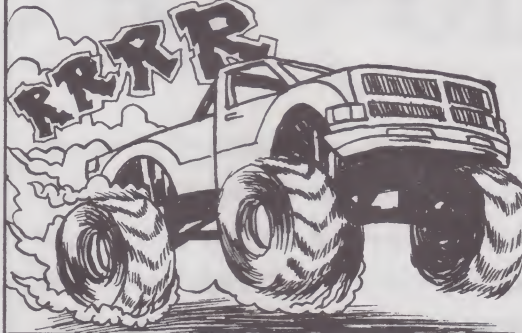
THIS IS A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT...

BY KIYOSHI

DEAR ROOM MATE,
WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
THAT IS YOU NEVER
CLEAN THE TOILET.



AFTER YOU TAKE A CRAP AND
LEAVE THOSE GIANT BROWN STREAKS
IN THE TOILET BOWL IS A
GOOD TIME TO CLEAN.
AND ALL THOSE PUBIC HAIRS
STUCK TO THE INSIDE OF
THE TOILET SEAT...

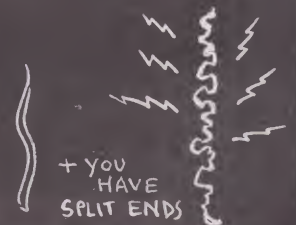


MONSTER SKID MARK ACTION!

THOSE ARE NOT
MY PUBES, THAT'S
RIGHT, THEY'RE
YOUR PUBES.
FLUSH THEM AWAY.

MINE: SHORT
BLACK 3
GRACEFUL

YOURS: LONG
FRIZZY 3
ANGRY



+ YOU
HAVE
SPLIT ENDS

AND WHILE WE ARE ON THE
SUBJECT WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR
AIM? I NOTICE THAT AFTER
I CLEAN THE TOILET YOUR
PISS ENDS UP ALL OVER IT
LIKE SOME SORT OF SATANIC
BAPTISM. DID YOU KNOW
THAT YOU CAN USE TOILET
PAPER TO WIPE PISS OFF
THE TOILET? IT'S NOT
JUST FOR YOUR ASS.



WHEN HE REIGNS IT POURS

I UNDERSTAND A LITTLE
DRIP WILL HAPPEN DURING
THE SHAKE BUT YOU ARE
OUT OF HAND. HOW? ASLEEP
AT THE WHEEL? DRUNK?
NEVER POTTY TRAINED?
WESTERN TOILETS SEEM
BACKWARDS TO YOU?



DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THESE ARE?



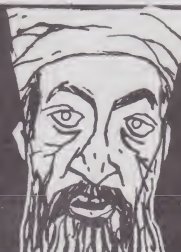
USE THEM!!!



HELLO THIS IS
OSAMA BIN LADEN
AND I DO NOT
APPROVE THIS
COMIC.



THE MESSAGE OF HYGIENE IS
GOOD BUT I DO NOT LIKE
HOW THE TONE IS MOCKING.
IT WILL HURT SOMEONE'S FEELINGS.



DOOT
DOOLA
DOOT
DOO...

DOOT
DOO!

WHO ARE YOU?

"I always wear
a bandana on
stage, like a
sweatband."

Nardwuar *VS.* Randy Bachman

of Bachman Turner Overdrive and the Guess Who!

Randy Bachman is the composer of two of Canada's national anthems: "Takin' Care of Business" by Bachman Turner Overdrive and "American Woman" by the Guess Who. Born in Winnipeg, he now calls Saltspring Island, British Columbia home, and thankfully was home when I caught up with him.

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Randy Bachman: Who am I? Sometimes I wonder.

Nardwuar: You are Randy Bachman.

Randy: I'm Randy Bachman.

Nardwuar: Randy, I was wondering: What is the Kentucky Fried Rat Story?

Randy: What?!

Nardwuar: The Kentucky Fried Rat Story.

Randy: Where'd you hear that?

Nardwuar: The Kentucky Fried Rat Story.

Randy: That's a story C.F. Turner of BTO told. He was with this band when it used to be called Port Arthur. Was it Port Arthur? Fort Murray? Ooh, I forget. In Thunder Bay. The Lakehead. That's real safe. He ordered a bucket of chicken for his band. They were eating, and he took a bite and thought, "Gee, this is weird." And he looked at it and it was a mouse! And they went back to the—should I say it?—the KFC place and complained. There were little pipes in there and the mice would run around and sometimes some would slip and—whoops!—fall in the batter! And so he actually ate a half of a Kentucky Fried Mouse!

Nardwuar: Did the Guess Who used to have lobster eating contests at King's Table restaurants?

Randy: Oh, yeah. Where'd you hear all these things?

Nardwuar: Oh, just wondering, Randy Bachman. Lobster eating contests in BTO?

Randy: You know, when you're from Winnipeg, you only hear of lobster. You

never get any, right. So we grew up in Winnipeg, and during our first trip to Halifax, the promoter had a little lobster fishery thing. And he said, "Do you guys want lobster?" This was with Burton Cummings (Guess Who) and us. And he just took us to the beach and they were just bringing them in and they just threw them in a pot. The tour was sponsored by Coca-Cola so we had cases of Coca-Cola and literally dozens of lobster. It was first time we really had fresh lobster, being from Winnipeg, and we ate until we got sick. What can I tell ya?

Nardwuar: Did you ever get kicked out of a King's Table at all, kicked out of one of those all-you-can-eat places, Randy Bachman?

Randy: No, they love us in there. We'd clean up the place!

Nardwuar: You know how a lot of your records were released in Japan? What are the lyric translations like of Bachman Turner Overdrive songs? I've heard that they can be pretty odd. Like "Let It Roll down the Highway" turns into "Take a Chance on the Old Saxophone."

Randy: It's hilarious. When you go to Japan, you buy your album and you pull out the lyrics—and you've even put in the English lyrics—I can remember "Roll on down the Highway." It was "I Rented a Duck and a Hemi a Go," instead of "We Rented a Truck and a Semi to Go." It is quite hilarious the way they translate it. That's about all I remember.

Nardwuar: What do you think of the Butthole Surfers' version of "American Woman"?

Randy: I think it's kind of neat. I see some humor in it. I mean, even their name is humorous. I get a great kick out of hearing cover versions of songs that I've written, how somebody else interprets it and takes it to their own level of music, be it lower than I did or higher than what I planned musically.

Nardwuar: When you were on tour with BTO, did your bandmates ever play tricks on you? Didn't one time Robbie Bachman have off-duty cops arrest you in your hotel room?

Randy: Yeah, that was pretty scary. It was somewhere in Indiana or Illinois, somewhere in the Midwest, and we were all heading out to get in our car to get to our gig at a big state fair; we were being paid a lot of money and there were forty thousand people. As I got out of the hotel, a police car pulls up and I think nothing of it. Two cops get out and they start walking towards me, and I still think nothing of it; I was thinking they were going into the restaurant of the Holiday Inn. They say, "Are you Randy Bachman?" I say, "Yes." They say, "Would you please get up, put your hands on the car, and spread your legs?" And I say, "What?!" They say, "You heard me. Lean against the car. Spread 'em!" I say, "You've got to be kidding! I have a bag in my hand." I always carry a bag with a bandana and a brush—I always wear a bandana on stage, like a sweatband—and had deodorant for after the gig. They put my hands behind me and put handcuffs on me. And they say, "We want to cite you for a violation." Meanwhile, Robbie had a video camera—he always films everything. He's filming this whole thing. I'm thinking, "Well, this is a mistake. This is really cool. I have this



Illustration by Mitch Clem

“We get to the state fair and I go to the promoter and say,
 ‘You’ve got to pay me the money right now.
 I’ve got to pay the cops
 or I can’t go on stage.’”

all on film.” Because once before I was arrested in New Orleans and Robbie has it all on film and it’s a real kick. I made a left turn in New Orleans; you get arrested for doing that. These guys say, “We have a warrant for your arrest. You received a speeding ticket in 1983 and you failed to appear before the judge.” Because not only do you get a ticket in the state, but you drive out of that state because you’re on tour; you never go back there. They say, “The penalty was \$900.00, and with the accrued penalty and interest, you now owe us \$14,000.00. This must be paid immediately or we’re going to lock you up.” I say, “Wait a minute. I’m going to a gig. There are 40,000 people waiting. I don’t have any money. I put it in the bank every morning.” And they say, “Well, we have to take you to jail. It’s our job.” The rest of the band is standing there with this look on their face—they don’t know what’s going on; Robbie is filming this whole thing. I say, “Lookit, please, please, please. Take me to the state fair. I’m being paid tonight. I’ll get all the money and I will give it to you.” So they throw me

in the back of this car, which is really tough because it has a little back seat and you have handcuffs on your hands and they’re wedged behind your back. By the way, it’s 103 degrees and I’m in the backseat with no air conditioning. I’m in the back of this car handcuffed, and I’m thinking, “What is going on?!” They drive me to the state fair; the band is following me behind. The siren’s going and the lights are flashing. We get to the state fair and I go to the promoter and say, “You’ve got to pay me the money right now. I’ve got to pay the cops or I can’t go on stage. You pay me right now and I will straighten this all out later.” And at that point the cops start laughing. And I figure, “Why are these guys laughing?” It was weird. It was like watching *Cops* on TV and then suddenly they burst out laughing. Robbie starts laughing and falls down on the floor. The cops say, “Gee, you’re really a good sport.” As they unlock my hands, they say, “This was just a joke put on by your brother.” And here Robbie was taping the whole thing. **Nardwuar:** Did you ever think about getting back at Robbie?

Randy: No, I let the thing go. Every time I see him, I ask him for a copy of it. He was going to send it to Ed McMahon and Dick Clark’s *Bloopers* on television but then the show went off the air.

Nardwuar: What was it like playing for convicts at Matsqui Prison?

Randy: Yeah, Matsqui. We played there once. We did a *Jailhouse Rock* with D.O.A. out in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan about seven or eight years ago. Now, that’s pretty weird. I mean, talk about a captive audience! They can’t go anywhere. They had a chance to vote, apparently, for whoever they wanted to come and entertain them, and their top two votes were BTO and D.O.A. MuchMusic decided to record it and they called it *Jailhouse Rock*. It was really a cool thing.

Nardwuar: All right, Randy Bachman. Doot doola doot doo...

Randy: Doot doo!

To hear this interview go to
www.nardwuar.com



A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"If a stick is handy, you'll poke it with a stick."

THE SHADY ID

Last issue, I wrote about the early life of one of my favorite writers, Jim Thompson. I covered his birth in an Oklahoma jail, the six years he spent as a high school freshman, his adventures as a drug dealer, bootlegger, and burlesque house comic during those six years, his hobo days when he hung out with the guy who wrote the song "Big Rock Candy Mountain," his history with the Oklahoma Communist Party, Woody Guthrie's help getting Thompson's first novel published, and Thompson's dream of suing God. Now, we pick up Thompson's life when he was forty-three years old, on the verge of his glory days and his tragic decline.

In 1949, crime writer Jim Thompson published his fourth novel, *Nothing More than Murder*. His three previous books had garnered positive reviews and decent book sales. They were good novels. But they weren't the books that would make him famous.

Nothing More than Murder, though, tapped into Thompson's shady past and it drilled the depths of his even shadier id. In one sense, it's a pure crime novel with all the plot twists and turns you'd expect from the genre. In another sense, it's Jim Thompson exploring the deepest recesses of his mind, finding those impulses that we never would or probably even could act upon, that we bury as well as we can, but that haunt and doom Thompson's characters. This was the first hint of Thompson doing what would make him a legend: he shed a light onto parts of the human psyche that most of us are a little afraid to look at, but, just like that bloated corpse you stumble across in the woods, you're completely fascinated by it. If a stick is handy, you'll poke it with a stick.

Reviewers loved *Nothing More than Murder*. They'd never seen anything like it. Very little of what was written at the time could match Thompson's honesty and brutality. Readers loved it, too. The paperback edition sold 750,000 copies. Thompson followed it up with two more novels that were equally edgy, equally haunting. Perhaps for this reason—that they were too edgy and haunting—no publisher would touch those two books.

In 1952, Thompson met an editor named Arnold Hano. Hano worked for Lion Books. Lion Books was a pulp publisher in the purest form. They were about little more than making money off of newsstand sales. The publisher of Lion Books, Martin Goodman, made most of his money off of men's magazines. He published some classic-style pin-up mags, hunting magazines, fishing magazines, anything that was easily digestible to men who were bored on the train in to work, or to men who had no interest in family radio or TV. Goodman's idea was to take this easily digestible, male-oriented philosophy into cheap paperbacks. He hired Hano to head the book division. Hano gathered a number of hack writers and commissioned them to write the books. Hano often outlined the plots based on classic stories—Greek tragedies, medieval British literature, etc.—told the writers to add plenty of sex and blood, and set them to work. A lot of the hacks didn't even know that they were rewriting classics as pulp novels.

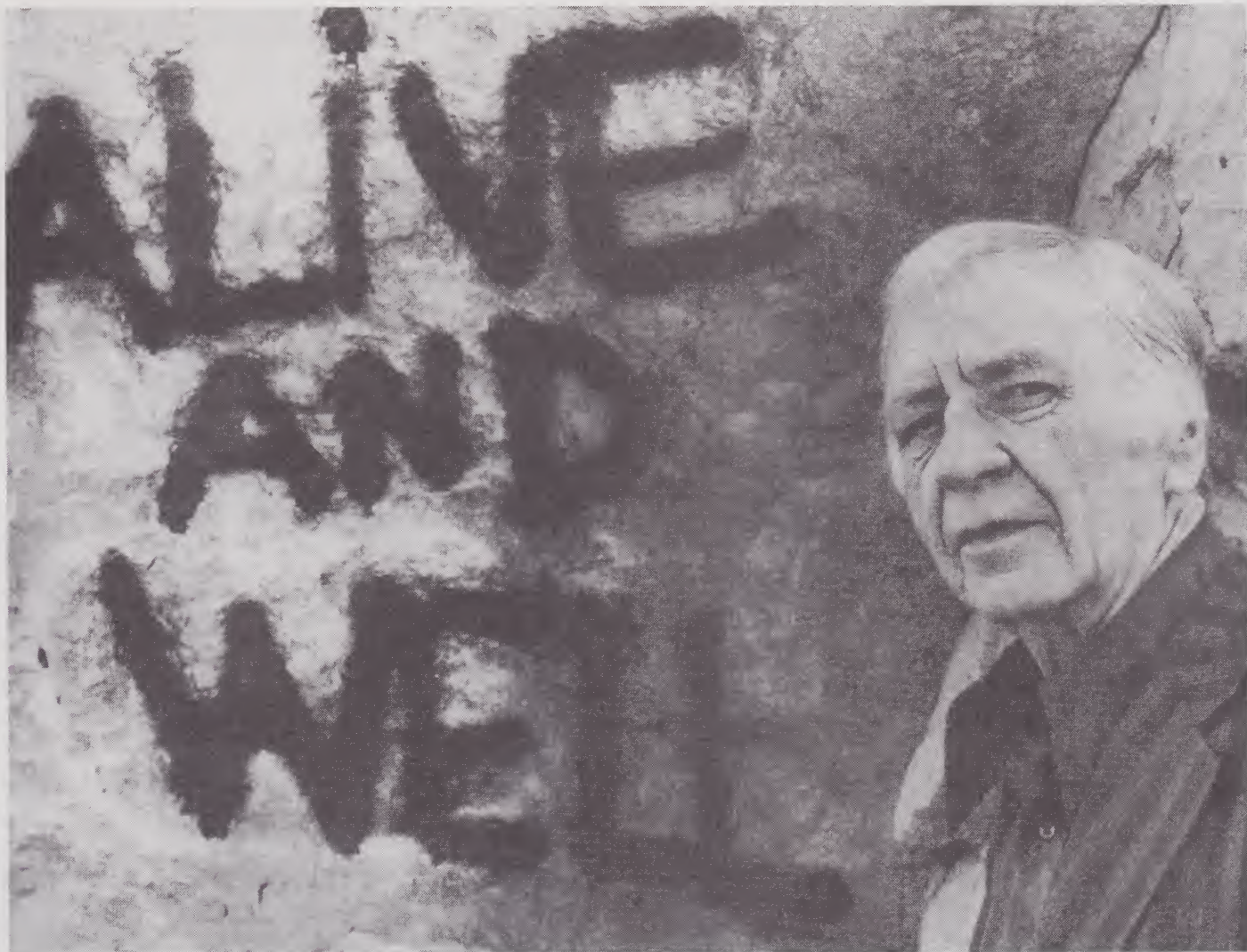
Originally, Thompson was hired on as one of these hacks. Since he was a well-read guy, he probably knew where the treatments came from. Clearly, he didn't care. Unlike most of the authors Lion Books published, Thompson paid little attention to the plot synopses. The first one he was given suggested he write a novel about a New York cop who gets involved with a prostitute and ends up killing her. Thompson moved the cop to west Texas, modeled him after Thompson's father, and blew the lid off the simple thriller plot. Rather than making the typical crime tale wherein you either try to figure out if the cop really killed the prostitute, or you follow the cop through an extended chase scene, wondering if he'll get caught, Thompson wrote an intense, psychological novel. The west Texas sheriff of the novel, Lou Ford, comes across to his constituency as an affable though simpleminded guy. When the prostitute is murdered, no one in town really expects the slow-witted Ford to solve the crime. Because she's a prostitute, most people in the town aren't too concerned, anyway. What they don't realize, though, is that Ford is extremely intelligent and his affable

simplemindedness is all a hoax. Once Ford realizes that he's going to get away with murder, his confidence swells. The novel twists and turns through a plot that you never saw coming.

Thompson handed this novel, which he titled *The Killer Inside Me*, in to Arnold Hano. Hano was blown away. *The Killer Inside Me* verified all of Hano's suspicions that Thompson was more than some pulp hack. He was a genuine talent. Hano gave Thompson free reign at this point to write whatever he wanted. Thompson, now forty-six and a veteran of a lifetime of artistic frustration, uncorked his potential. Writing mostly from an upstairs bedroom in his sister's house, Thompson wrote twelve novels in nineteen months. He wrote so much so fast that it took Lion Books five years to publish all the books. These nineteen months were really the glory days for Thompson. His books were immensely popular, selling on average a quarter million copies each. His readership was huge. Beyond that, he was writing some of the best books of his career, most notably *A Hell of a Woman*, *After Dark*, *My Sweet*, and, of course, *The Killer Inside Me*. With these three books in particular, Thompson managed to transcend basic ideas of what a popular novel should be. He wrote books that were geared for a mass audience, full of deviant sex and grotesque violence, and made those books literary and psychological masterpieces. These books influenced later Pulitzer-Prize-winning authors like William S. Burroughs, paved the way for gonzo novelists like Norman Mailer and Hunter S. Thompson.

Lion Books paid Thompson between \$900 and \$2500 for each book. At the time, this was pretty good money. The downside, though, was that they bought the books outright, so Thompson received no royalties. The real crime in these novels was in the accounting. Thompson made far less than a penny each for the over three million books he sold during the mid-fifties.

Compounding Thompson's bad luck, Arnold Hano quit Lion Books in 1954. Lion Books didn't value Thompson as a writer despite his huge book sales. They continued to publish the books that they had already



They were fucked up people living fucked up lives, and Thompson portrayed them in all their sociopathic glory.

paid him for, but they bought no more books from Thompson once Hano quit.

By the late fifties, Thompson had published sixteen novels, garnered critical acclaim, developed a worldwide audience, and sold millions of copies of his books—and no publisher in the U.S. would touch him. It's hard to say why publishers stayed away. When a publisher turns down a book, he rarely gives a reason why. No concrete evidence exists to demonstrate why Thompson kept getting rejected. A number of these books and stories were published later in Thompson's life or after his death and three of the books he couldn't initially find a publisher for—*The Getaway*, *Pop. 1280*, and *This World, Then the Fireworks*—are my three favorites. All three have been adapted into movies. *The Getaway* was adapted into two movies. This suggests that the books probably weren't turned away because of a perceived lack of quality or mass appeal. My personal theory about Thompson's dry spell has more to do with the content of his books. Thompson never

shied away from the disturbing elements of the human psyche. He wrote scenes of rape, incest, brutality, and, of course, murder. His characters often didn't have many redeemable characteristics. They rarely learned their lessons and sometimes got away with their crimes when you didn't want them to. These weren't novels of justice or redemption. They were fucked up people living fucked up lives, and Thompson portrayed them in all their sociopathic glory. Knowing this and knowing what I know about the publishing industry, I'm actually less surprised to find that Thompson had trouble getting published despite his success, and I'm more surprised he got published at all.

Around this time of his life, Hollywood came knocking. The first director to take an interest in Thompson was Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick went on to become the legendary director of movies like *A Clockwork Orange* and *Dr. Strangelove*. When he approached Thompson, though, Kubrick was still an aspiring filmmaker. Kubrick had purchased the film rights to a Lionel White novel,

Clean Break. He hired Thompson to adapt the novel to film. What happened next is disputed. According to Thompson, he adapted the novel into the screenplay for the film *The Killing*. Kubrick, however, claims to have written the screenplay himself and hired Thompson only to tinker with the dialog. It's hard to say who is telling the truth. Thompson was notorious for embellishing his own life story, and Kubrick was notorious for cheating writers out of their cut in his films. Evidence suggests that Thompson did write the screenplay himself. For one thing, the style of writing matches Thompson's perfectly. Exact phrases in the movie come from Thompson's novels, the film's characters all talk in the idiosyncratic ways of Thompson's characters, and the movie in general plays out with all the distinctive trademarks of a Jim Thompson novel. More than that, it's clear that the plot matches the plot of White's *Clean Break*. And if the plot is already written, the only thing left to do in the screenplay adaptation is to write the dialog.



yeah, we were at the fest, too.

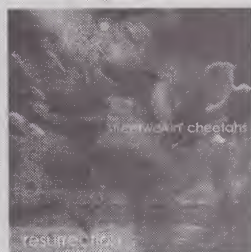
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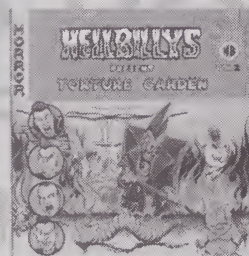
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Regardless of your perspective on who wrote it, *The Killing* is one of the coolest movies ever made. I'm not being hyperbolic to say that it has the best ending of any movie I've ever seen. It also marks the beginning of the last phase of Thompson's career—his years of being screwed by Hollywood.

After (probably) robbing Thompson of his credit in *The Killing*, Kubrick's producer and partner, Jimmy Harris, commissioned Thompson to write a novella upon which Kubrick and Harris could make a movie. Thompson wrote the novella *Lunatic at Large*. Harris decided not to make a movie out of it. Since Harris owned the rights to it, Thompson was never able to publish this novella. Even worse, Harris owned the only copy of the manuscript, and he lost it. The entire manuscript was never found again. Portions of the manuscript were found in an old Kubrick-Harris storage space thirty years after Harris claimed to have lost it. The portions found suggest that *Lunatic at Large* may have been Thompson's great lost book, but we'll likely never know.

Thompson continued to yo-yo up and down in Hollywood. Big producers would have an interest in making movies out of his books, but inevitably, it wouldn't work out for Thompson. He continued to struggle to make a living and this aggravated his alcoholism. Thompson's novels from his Lion Books days were translated into French, and he became a

big star on that side of the Atlantic. Foreign book rights kept food on his table most nights. His flirtations with Hollywood helped him get more novels published. Most significantly, Thompson's work with Kubrick helped him to finally get *The Getaway* published by New American Library. Though *The Getaway* was adapted into two awful movies, the novel itself is Thompson's own *Inferno*, leading the reader through a tour of Hell. Thompson's publisher wanted Thompson to tone down the

print novels. At one point, they gave him ten dollars for the film rights to his novel *South of Heaven*. Thompson at the time was drunk and spent the money on more booze. Bill, rather than following the protocol of optioning rights for the book, made sure to get the full rights for the book forever. Thompson had no recollection of signing the film rights over. Redford and Bill never did make a movie out of *South of Heaven* or any of Thompson's books. Redford and Bill did make the movie *The Sting*, and this catapulted Bill's career. A few years later, Thompson was in bad health and struggling to pay his medical bills. Another filmmaker offered him \$10,000 for the film rights to

South of Heaven. This seemed like a godsend for Thompson. Instead, Tony Bill got wind of it and blocked Thompson's sale. According to Thompson's children, this was the final straw. I don't know if this disappointment killed him, but Thompson did die shortly thereafter, at the age of seventy-one.

A few years after his death, Random House started a book imprint called the Black Lizard Crime Series. They reprinted most of Thompson's books. Hollywood actually came through in their promises, making films out of several of Thompson's stories—most notably the 1991 film *The Grifters*. It's sad that Thompson never got to see the success he struggled so long for, but at least his words survive.

—Sean Carswell

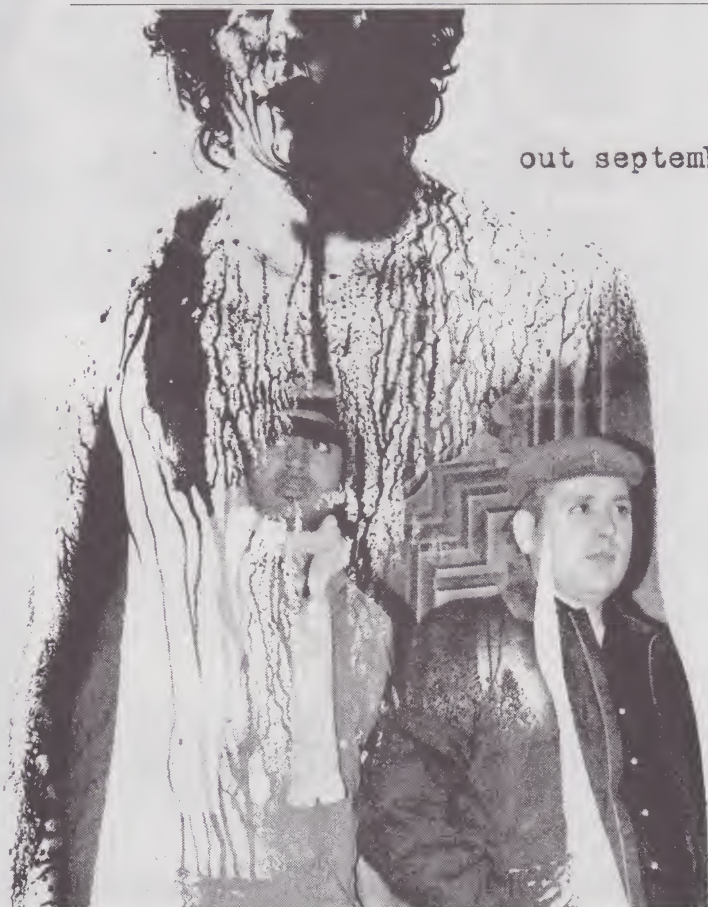


Thompson made far less than a penny each for the over three million books he sold during the mid-fifties.



ending of the book, though that is the element of the book that makes it so amazing. Rather than do this, Thompson bluffed his editor, claiming that Gary Cooper was set to star in the film adaptation. The publisher failed to call Thompson's bluff. The world is a better place because of that.

As Thompson limped into his sixties, his descent continued. He had small successes writing for television. He even penned a *Quincy* episode. But for the most part, he continued to have trouble getting books published and he continued to get screwed by Hollywood. For a time in the early 1970s, Robert Redford and Tony Bill did what they could to revive his career. They made a lot of promises and offered small sums of money for the film rights of Thompson's out-of-



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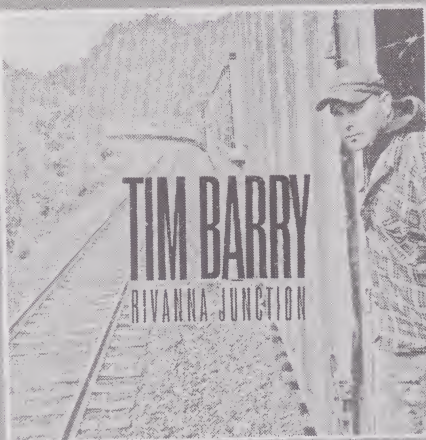
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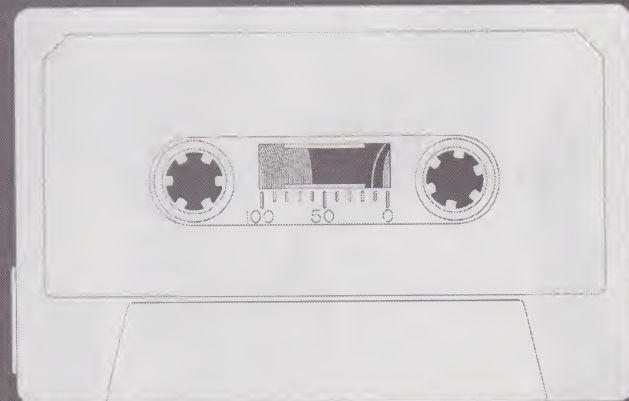
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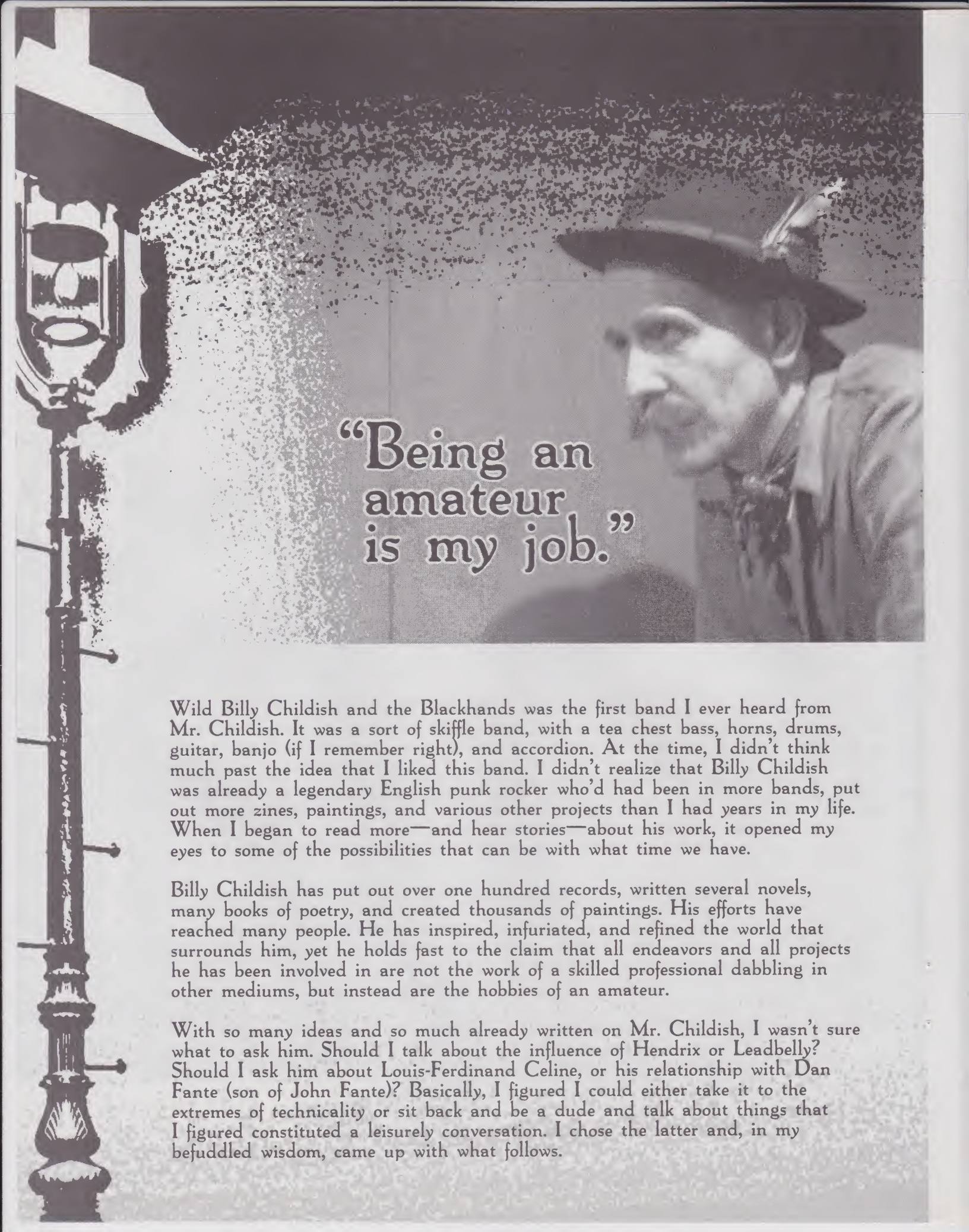


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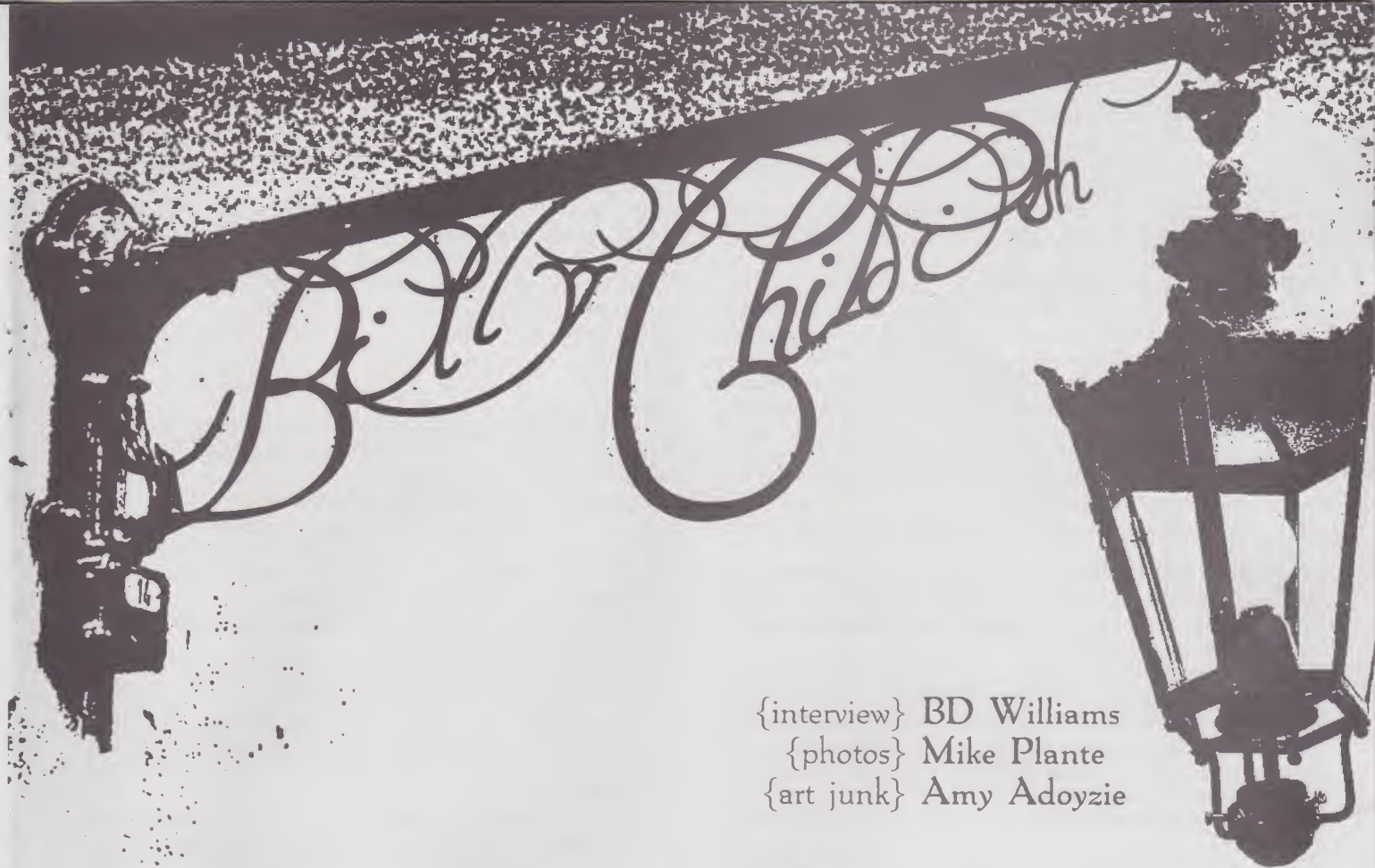


“Being an
amateur
is my job.”

Wild Billy Childish and the Blackhands was the first band I ever heard from Mr. Childish. It was a sort of skiffle band, with a tea chest bass, horns, drums, guitar, banjo (if I remember right), and accordion. At the time, I didn't think much past the idea that I liked this band. I didn't realize that Billy Childish was already a legendary English punk rocker who'd had been in more bands, put out more zines, paintings, and various other projects than I had years in my life. When I began to read more—and hear stories—about his work, it opened my eyes to some of the possibilities that can be with what time we have.

Billy Childish has put out over one hundred records, written several novels, many books of poetry, and created thousands of paintings. His efforts have reached many people. He has inspired, infuriated, and refined the world that surrounds him, yet he holds fast to the claim that all endeavors and all projects he has been involved in are not the work of a skilled professional dabbling in other mediums, but instead are the hobbies of an amateur.

With so many ideas and so much already written on Mr. Childish, I wasn't sure what to ask him. Should I talk about the influence of Hendrix or Leadbelly? Should I ask him about Louis-Ferdinand Celine, or his relationship with Dan Fante (son of John Fante)? Basically, I figured I could either take it to the extremes of technicality or sit back and be a dude and talk about things that I figured constituted a leisurely conversation. I chose the latter and, in my befuddled wisdom, came up with what follows.



{interview} BD Williams
{photos} Mike Plante
{art junk} Amy Adoyzie

BD: State your name, age, and occupation.

Billy: My name is Billy Childish. I am forty-six years old and I've got lots of different jobs; most of them I don't do.

BD: Which ones do you not do?

Billy: Well, I don't really do any of them. Being an amateur is my job: amateur and gentleman.

BD: Being a gentleman is not something people claim out here in southern California a lot, but in the South, where I'm from, we have the southern gentleman.

Billy: A southern gentleman... who'd be a southern gentleman?

BD: William Faulkner.

Billy: What about Atticus Finch? The chap... the lawyer out of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He's a southern gentleman isn't he? Leadbelly would be a southern gentleman—one who's killed a few people—but hopefully learned not to do that.

BD: What's it like where you're from?

Billy: It's thirty miles outside London on a river, and it used to be a very big naval dockyard for the Royal Navy, but it's not anymore, so they got a bit of half-assed tourism and no real sort of cultural element at all.

BD: Seems like you might help bring some of the cultural element to them.

Billy: Ah, they don't really want it.

BD: What kind of bicycle do you have?

Billy: I've got a couple of bikes. I've got one, a 1913—it's a bit unidentified—but it's probably an Royal Enfield, and then I've got a 1935 BSA, twin tubed. So it's a 28-inch frame. Very tall.

BD: Was that the bike you were riding in the video (*The Golden Monkey*)?

Billy: Yeah. I think that was the bike, but you couldn't really see it very clearly 'cause I was on it. And the other one was the Enfield. Yeah, I've got a couple of old bikes.

BD: Do you have any favorite bike or rides that you take normally?

Billy: No, I just take them on the train and cycle around London, really, instead of going on the tube. It's a bit dangerous.

BD: The tube is?

Billy: No, the cycling around London.

BD: Do you ever go fishing?

Billy: Not since I was about twelve. Everything has changed. The river doesn't look so good around where we used to go fishing. There's a lot more people about, a lot more houses. I did enjoy fishing when I was young.

BD: What about climbing trees?

Billy: Again, I was very good at climbing trees—I wasn't a great fisherman—but I was very good at climbing trees, but now I've got older, you become more worried about heights and danger. So, when I was a kid, I had no fear of heights whatsoever, or death, and now I sort of worry about falling out of the tree or something. I'm quite nimble. I can nip up—you know, I walk along the tops of walls a lot still. Not necessarily to show off; on my own, when no one's about... and I will climb a tree a bit now and then.

BD: So the *Shoulder Leap of Death* (one of Billy's films where he performs the feat of jumping onto someone's shoulders) wasn't terrifying?

Billy: Well he's a tall chap Wolf (the six-foot plus drummer for the Medways and Chatham Singers whose shoulders Billy jumped onto). You've got to be careful. I used to do it when I drank in the pub: the *Shoulder Leap of Death*. Doing that in the garden, I've got to trust that he's going to catch my legs, and I'm not going to fly over the top of him, 'cause he's about 6' 3", I suppose.

BD: Do ya'll have any pets?

Billy: No, I don't really sort of like the smell of... their food. We've got some mice who visit, but they're not really pets—probably get rid of them. I don't mind animals. I did try and capture a crow last

year—he was ill—but I couldn't catch him and he was dead the next day anyway. I think he was dying. But I've got his skull. I went and found him and then went back a week later and borrowed his skull.

BD: Do you have a spirit animal?

Billy: Let me think... I always thought that my son's one was a deer... Now, what would mine be? I supposed it would be a red squirrel, I suppose.

BD: We've got ground squirrels here.

Billy: Yeah and you've got gray squirrels and they've got them in England now and they've nearly destroyed all the red squirrels. They've been doing it more and more. Up until the '40s, there were still quite a lot of red squirrels, but the American squirrels, brought over a long time ago, have gradually been decimating the red squirrel and a lot of the habitat the red squirrel's got. I like robins, English Robins. I'm not sure if there's any other animal there, but I've always been partial to red squirrels. They've got tufts on their ears. They're very cute compared to gray squirrels.

BD: You mentioned the garden in the back yard. What do you grow there?

Billy: Just a little bit: beet root and some greens, sometimes, and potatoes. We haven't got a lot of room, but we have got a little bit.

BD: Hangman Press, Hangman Records, and Hangman's Daughter; how do these relate to each other?

Billy: Hangman Books started first, and then I did Hangman Records, and then the people who did distribution wanted me to do CDs and I wouldn't and then that label collapsed because I wouldn't do CDs and someone else wanted to do CDs, and I said they could do it as Hangman's Daughter. And that was that. And that doesn't exist either.

BD: Hangman's Daughter.

Billy: Yeah, it hasn't existed for ages and ages. But Hangman Books still exists.

BD: So are you doing a poetry tour or are you over here visiting?

Billy: No, I'm doing poetry. But it's not a tour. A tour is usually something that agents are involved with. We're just doing half-dozen shows and visiting Julie's family. So I said, "Well, I should do some shows as well."

BD: Are there any poets who you are into now or been into in the past?

Billy: I like some things. I wouldn't say I was a fan of poetry, though. It's not something I like very much.

BD: But you write it...

Billy: Yeah, but I don't like music much either. I just... poetry is not something I have a great love of, or poets.

BD: Do you play 78s?

Billy: No. I've got one but I don't play it. My friend gave me *The Third Man* on 78, but I don't play it. I don't listen to records much.

BD: Is there anything you listen to?

Billy: I don't, really. About two or three times a year we might get records out and listen. And I'll play things my wife hasn't heard or she'll play things I haven't heard. She likes music, but I don't like her to play music or listen to the radio when I'm there 'cause it irritates me. I don't like noise.

BD: So are the days silent?

Billy: Yeah.

BD: Quiet?

Billy: Yeah.

BD: On an album it said you play the glockenspiel. What is that?

Billy: Glockenspiel... it's one of those dun, dong, ding. [Makes the motions of playing a xylophone.]

BD: I thought it was a wind organ of some kind.

Billy: No, we've got some old wind organs at home and things.

BD: We were listening to *The Cheeky Cheese* (an album of rather strange nursery rhymes he recorded with Sexton Ming, who he collaborated on several albums with) last night...

Billy: Yeah, it's got some glockenspiel and some wind organ on it.


BD: What's up with Sexton Ming?

Billy: Ahh, he's all right. He's just doing his stuff. We're half way through doing another LP, but we did half of it a year and a half ago and we haven't done the other half yet. We might do it, just another *Cheeky Cheese* stuff. We've been doing those since the early eighties... late seventies, really. And this new one's called *Dung Beagle Rolls Again*.

BD: There's a photo from *Plump Prizes and Little Gems* (another Childish/Ming collaboration) of you and Sexton, and there's a house in the background with a lot of paintings on it. Is that where you live now?

Billy: No, that's where I lived then. It was a rented house, and that garden had the cherry tree knocked down and another house built on the side of it. That shed was on the side—where we had the paintings on it—and they've concreted over the garden, so it's just a concrete lump there. It's sort of gone. That was 107 Rochester Street. Yeah, we did an album called *107 Rochester Street*, I think. It's some of our Milkshakes (one of the labels they recorded on) demos that we recorded there. The *107 Tapes* I think it's called.

BD: On *Caesars Remains*, you are all wearing Napalm Death shirts. What's up with that?



“It's good not to be good
at some things so you don't
have to do it.”

Billy: Well I've never heard Napalm Death—that photo was taken in Holland—and I suppose Napalm Death were around about that time and we were playing this club and they had these T-shirts there, and I think it said that they... does it say they were the fastest group in the world or something? I think it said "fastest group in the world" and I thought that was really good. Because it's not like, "My group's faster than your group." I just liked the idea that it was the fastest group in the world, not the best group. And I thought it was a silly name as well so we probably just all said, "Oh can we have a T-shirt?" and happened to be wearing them. I've never heard Napalm Death I don't think. You know, it's a silly name isn't it? Sexton likes that sort of thing, but I couldn't be involved in that. I had to be on a record with him. He did a death metal album.

BD: Sexton did?

Billy: Yeah apparently. And it's called—we released a couple of tracks on one of the *Medway Powerhouse* (compilations)—and it's called... I can't remember the name he used; someone and "heavy mates." There's a thing called "Make a Cod Piece out of Wilkin's Face," and Wilkins—that's Russ—Russ was in the Pop Rivets and the couple of groups we were in, and Sexton did a song called "Make a Cod Piece out of Wilkin's Face," and it's some sort of death metal thing. I had to play guitar for it.

BD: You did?

Billy: I think I had to. Yeah. We recorded an album that never came out. We had a couple of tracks on some of the Powerhouse Records, but I can't remember the name of the group.

BD: Have you ever seen a UFO?

Billy: Yeah.

BD: Where?

Billy: In the garden when I was little. It was flying across the house in broad daylight. It was a very slow-moving silver disk—revolving very slowly. You couldn't tell how big it was, but it looked like it was about ten or fifteen feet across. A perfect circle going very slowly. It looked like it was a hundred or a couple hundred feet up. I saw it and I showed it to my brother and he said it wasn't a flying saucer, it was a jet, and I said, "Well, why is it round then?" My brother's



older than me and if he saw something that doesn't compute, he has to make it into something else. But there was another boy there who saw it as well. I saw lots of odd things when I was a kid.

BD: You ever seen a ghost?

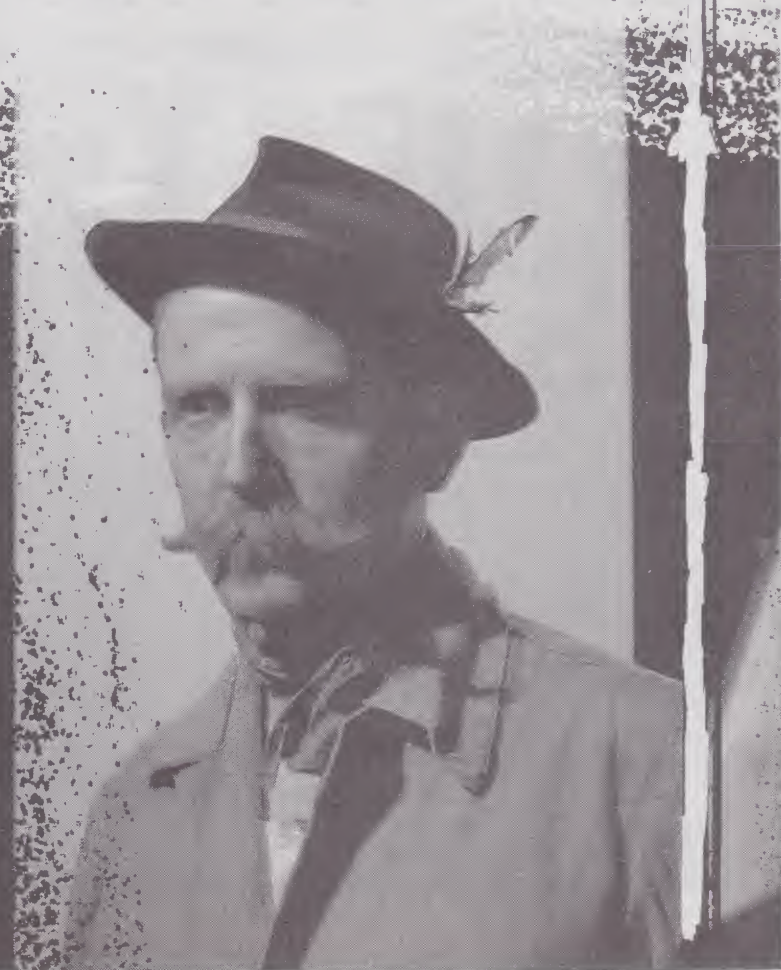
Billy: Yeah, I've seen a ghost.

BD: Do you have a ghost story?

Billy: Not really, but I've seen ghosts. Sort of like things at nighttime, quite close up. And I saw a goblin type thing when I was about fourteen. And I saw a panther as well, which people thought was sort of a spirit animal—that might be a spirit animal for me, it might be a panther—but I saw one when I was about fourteen, and now it's recognized as a lot of these things that live in England. There's lots of big cats.

BD: Really?

Billy: Yeah, and there's lots of sightings of them, but when I saw them people wouldn't... didn't... you know it wasn't known then. I saw it when I was fourteen—quite close—a panther in the woods.



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BD: Tell me about the Native American songs album you did.

Billy: I'm interested in those sort of things. I find novels a bit silly, so I like reading history a bit. A lot of history is silly as well, but maybe not as silly as novels. I was interested in American Indian stuff since I was about seventeen or eighteen. I think I read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, and then I was interested in a lot of American Indian stuff, and also listening to Jimmy Hendrix, or Link Wray, people like that—Muddy Waters, who've obviously got a bit of American Indian background. My wife's a bit of American Indian. Julie's like Black, American Indian, and English.

BD: A friend of mine sent me a (Louis-Ferdinand) Celine quote the other day that read, "Never believe straight off in a man's unhappiness. Ask him if he can still sleep. If the answer is yes, all is well. That is enough."

Billy: Yeah, if someone can sleep, they're doing all right, I suppose. In a miserable sort of way,

Celine was a bit of a comedian, really, isn't he?

BD: What about your translation of *Cannon Fodder* (a collection of pieces from an unfinished manuscript which was stolen from Celine's apartment)?

Billy: That's not really much of a translation, really. Kyra (De Coninck) did most of the stuff. She could speak the language, and I'd just tell her to guess what was being said and I'd just try and write it into English, because I don't speak any other languages. So it was collaboration. And French isn't her first language—she's Belgium—so Dutch was her first, French was her second, and we had to do it like that, and she'd just tell me what she thought was going on and then I'd write it down. And I was very familiar with Celine's writing so I could guess a bit on how it would be written or what it would be about.

BD: I have a copy of your book *Notebook of a Naked Youth* and one of the first things I noticed was the use of ellipses, the "...", the "little music" that I think Celine called it.

Billy: All right.

BD: Yeah, after *Journey to the End of the Night* with *Death on the Installment Plan*, the translators either decided to include it or Celine himself developed it more, I'm not sure, but you use it?

Billy: Yeah, I know. I don't really use it so much any more. What it was is trying to find a way—it definitely came from Celine when I was doing it—but it was sort of like finding a way, because I don't really understand punctuation, but I understand punctuation a bit more now so I don't need it as much.

BD: What do you think about structured grammar as a whole?

Billy: Well, I think it's nice to communicate what you mean. In history books, maybe, or in textbooks, I think spelling and grammar are probably quite handy. But I don't like things being too standardized. When I write, I try to work out how things... people... You know, if you've got a computer and I write something into it, it says, "this is not a real sentence" for everything I write. But then that means that nobody speaks in real sentences, you know, because if you write down how people talk then it was not a real sentence. So, it's like trying to get something that approximates the way people talk to each other, which really blows out a lot of grammar. I don't know much about... I'm very uneducated and I don't know much about grammar. I don't know what vowels and nouns and things are. I only know they're names for things.

BD: What kind of wood do you use for your woodcuts?

Billy: I think pear is meant to be very good. I've never used proper wood. I just use old pine, and then it's very splintery and harder to control. The stronger the grain is, the more difficult it is to cut. So pine's probably the worst thing, and that's what I use. You know; it's splintery, and a lot of people don't use it.

BD: What about building things? Have you ever built a house or a guitar or a banjo?

Billy: No. I'm not so good at doing practical things. I decided that I don't do that, and that means I can't be asked to do it then. It's good not to be good at some things so you don't have to do it. My brother

can do that stuff. I reckon I could build a house if I had to. I could build a strange type of shelter if I needed to, and it probably would be quite good.

BD: Like what?

Billy: I don't know. Some sort of shed. I like sheds. But I could probably knock something together if push comes to shove, you know, if I was in Robinson Crusoe's sort of situation.

BD: I want to thank you for your hospitality and time for letting me ask you these questions, but I have one more. I grew a mustache for six months one time 'cause I was bored, and I got a lot of food caught in it...

Billy: Yeah.

BD: What's the worst food to eat with a mustache the likes of yours?

Billy: Ice cream. And buttered toast. The worst thing to eat when having a mustache is butter or cream 'cause it smells, immediately. Even the freshest butter—if you get it in your mustache you can just smell it—and then it takes a lot to wash it out. So if you eat buttered toast, it's best to eat it upside down. Yeah. It's no good.



THE LOVED ONES



The Loved Ones interview
and intro by Joe Evans III

Photos by Rudy Olivarez
Layout by Uri Garcia

Our world of punk rock may be small compared to the "real" world, but that doesn't mean it can't get just as crazy at times. One minute everyone is praising a band's merit with all of their heart and spirit, the next minute they're condemning them, for doing unspeakable things such as adding a new harpsichord player to their lineup. Your band may be their life, but you better do things by their rules, and give the people exactly what they want. All things considered, that's kind of a shame, too. You can only turn up the distortion so much, scream so loud, or play so fast before it all starts to blend together and get boring. But then, something funny happened.

This is where Philadelphia's (and also Washington DC, if you really want to get nitpicky about it) The Loved Ones come in. Here's a place already well known for having some amazing stuff going on (between bands like Kill The Man Who Questions and Kid Dynamite, or show promoters having to compete against media giants [and doing well for themselves, too]), where it's fairly easy to quickly get involved, and suddenly finding yourself in the middle of something big. The members of The Loved Ones already have an impressive list of accomplishments under their collective names, but it didn't really stop them from saying, "Sure we've done a lot, but let's try something new."

It's a little tough to compare them to their previous endeavors. "Um, like more poppy, even though some of their old bands were kinda poppy too?" Or maybe, "Even *more* heartfelt, even though some of their old bands were too," as if implying that everything they'd done before was little more than, "Oh, that's nice"? Maybe the best thing to call it is "something new."

Dave Hause: guitars, vocals
Michael "Spider" Cotterman: bass
Mike Sneeringer: drums

Joe: So what's the story with the rat, the newt, and the bear?

Dave: Did you get that story from the Bouncing Souls?

Joe: Yup.

Dave: I was working for the Bouncing Souls (on the road during one of their tours), with my friends Bob—who was doing their live sound—and Nick was driving everyone from show to show. Now, Nick is a pretty big, tall, gruff, and as you can guess, kinda like a bear. He's a great guy with a heart of gold. Anyway, he would always be really tired from driving and end up falling asleep backstage while we were doing the sound check. Noticing this, Bob and I sort of decided that we were going to mess with him a little. So one night after he falls asleep, we tape his arms and legs together, cover him in candy, and all sorts of other crazy stuff we could find lying around [laughing]. We made this hat out of a Styrofoam bowl and put it over his head. It's just this story that got a little bit exaggerated, but I guess not by much since we essentially did all of that stuff to him—and he woke up and was freaking out while we were waiting there for him. It's kind of a Bouncing Souls inside joke, but the gist of it is the time when Nick freaked out because Bob and I were completely torturing him.

Joe: Dave, did you start off by *being* in bands, or working *with* bands?

Dave: I was in bands in high school and stuff like that, but starting out touring—I started with Kid Dynamite as their merch guy, in 1999, or maybe 1998. I roadied for a couple of years, and then did a band called The Curse. We were together for about a year and then it fizzled out. From there I was just doing some other roadie stuff while writing songs that would ultimately become Loved Ones material, and starting to put that all together.

Joe: And you did some managing too?

Dave: Actually *tour* managing. That's actually what keeps going into our bio. I should probably have that corrected [laughing]. I've never managed a band other than this one. For all intents and purposes we don't really have a manager. But this was tour managing, which is like a whole different animal. I was just doing things like making

I think it's a
cool culture
we have in Philly.
I guess you
could call it
incestuous...



sure The Explosion would get to their show on time, and that they got paid. And if anyone got drunk and broke anything, I had to smooth over the water, so to speak [laughing]. But I never actually "managed" anything.

Joe: And you also own and run your own construction company?

Dave: I actually co-own it, with my partner Jed, yeah.

Joe: How long have you been doing that for?

Dave: Well, I was a subcontractor for years and years. In between touring when I was working for bands, I would come home and do different construction work. It just got to the point where my friend Jed was also a subcontractor, and we decided, "Hey, we could make a lot more money if we had our own company." The company that hired us as subs just gave us our own contract. Ultimately, it was a decision I had to make if I was going to continue to tour, just out of necessity: I got married, bought a house. I have to be able to maintain all of that. Fortunately, Jed is a great dude who's willing to hold down the fort while we're on tour [laughs].

Joe: Spider, you work at *The Washington Post*?

Spider: Yes.

Joe: What do you do there?

Spider: I'm a Copy Aide there, which mostly means I don't do anything that exciting. Sometimes I'll do some small writing assignments, but I've really worked all over the paper. I've worked for the style section, the weekend section. I've worked for the Kids Post department, which was a lot of fun. I'm just glad they let me go on tour and haven't fired me yet. They're pretty supportive of this life.

Joe: And Mike, you work for a catering service?

Mike: I do.

Joe: How did you get involved with that?

Mike: Well, when I first came to Philadelphia I was looking for jobs and applied to a couple different places, just doing retail BS, since

I needed a job that I'd be able to go on tour and come back to. I saw an ad for this restaurant that was hiring so I went in and had an interview and they told me to come back again. I thought they meant for a second interview, but they meant to come work. I waited tables there for a while, and then they asked me to do some other work in the catering department. I guess I did a good job at it, because they started paying me pretty well and I stopped waiting tables. What I do is basically get there really early, at like six in the morning, prepare the orders to go out, and then drive them and set them up. We mostly do stuff like boring office meetings, stuff like that. I've catered Rob Thomas's (Matchbox Twenty) video shoot, though.

Joe: What was that like? Did anything funny happen?

Mike: No, not too much out of the ordinary. They did order a lot of food and I only saw about five people so they must have been really pigging out. [laughing] Other than that, it just looked hilarious. They had a smoke machine going in the backroom. I was clearing through it all just to find the tables! [laughing] I don't know if I'd be into it if I had to actually serve. I'm really more kinda the silent guy who walks in, sets up, and gets the hell out of there. They let me tour whenever I want though.

Joe: Spider, how did you end up with a glass eye?

Spider: [laughs] I actually don't have one, but when I first joined Kid Dynamite, Dave (Hause) convinced everyone else I had a glass eye, and they believed it! And he kept them going for probably a month! I'd wonder why everyone else would want to look at my driver's license. I guess Jason (Singer of Kid Dynamite) thought it would say something about it on my driver's license.

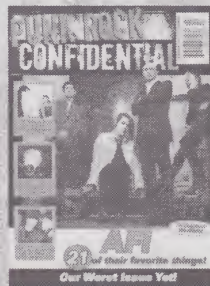
Joe: So you were completely unaware of him doing this?

Spider: Yeah. He finally let me in on it after a few weeks, and we kept it going for another few weeks after that. But, for the record, I have two fully functioning eyes!

Joe: Mike, you're also a bicycle enthusiast?

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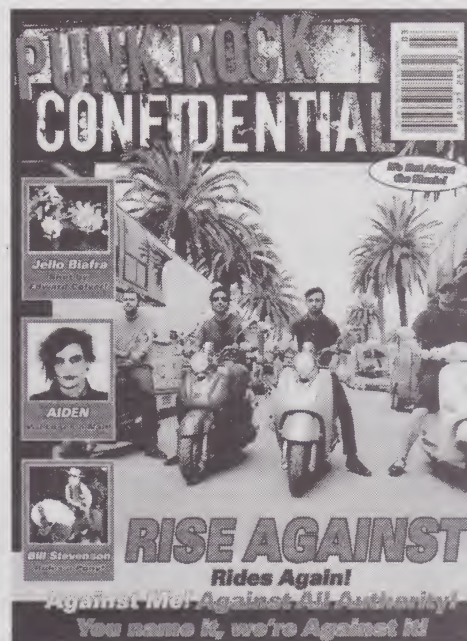
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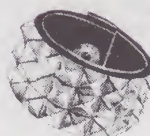
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Mike: Yes, this is true.

Joe: And this also includes working on your own fixed-gear bike?

Mike: I have many, yeah. I just sold my Cannondale track, and I just traded my EAI bare knuckle track for an older Italian vintage track frame. I've built a couple conversions, and I have an IRO track frame, that's more like a street-fixed frame. I have an Itala road bike, I just sold a Pinnerelo road bike. Other than playing music it's definitely my main hobby, I geek out about it.

Joe: How did you get into all of that?

Mike: Actually, when I was in a band called Trial By Fire, two of the guys in that band were bike messengers in DC. The fixed gear bike is a favorite amongst messengers because it's very simple, reliable, and really good if you know how to ride it in traffic; the way you can transfer your weight and pivot, it's just really smooth through traffic. So I started riding my guitarist Colin's track bike around—he had a Benotto track bike—and it's an addictive feeling. A couple of my other friends were getting into biking around that time, so I got a road bike, eventually converted it to single speed, and then went fixed two years ago and have been riding brakeless fixed since.

how to do that from being in bands and working with bands. So we definitely came out of the gate and haven't slowed down from day one. And we've had a clear, defined vision of what we wanted to do both musically, aesthetically. All that stuff we sort of knew: "Okay, this is what we're going with," and I think it's been cool. It's not *quite* as organic as a band such as the Bouncing Souls, who've been around for fifteen years. They were a funk band for a couple of years, and like this and that. They've gone through a number of changes, which I think that's endearing. I think people love bands like that—who have been around for so long because they've grown up with them—and seen them change. I guess with us it's just that we hit the ground running, and we're hoping people will connect with what we're doing.

Joe: To expand on that a little, Philadelphia is known for having a very strong punk scene, between people being in multiple bands, as well as working together to have shows. Has any of this affected the way you've worked with this band?

Dave: Well, the only thing we've run into with that was when I was in both Paint It Black and The Loved Ones. Once The Loved Ones

I feel fortunate about it to be part of a community like that.

Joe: Have you thought about converting your van to run on a "greasel" system (Also known as the "Biodiesel" system, which converts vehicles to run on vegetable oil instead of regular fuel)?

Dave: Yeah, you know we got a new truck when we signed to Fat, and it's outfitted like a tour bus like the Descendents and Bouncing Souls did, with beds, and room for all of our equipment and other stuff, so that it's a little easier to spend a lot of time on the road. It's like a big, fancy tour bus, just not as big or fancy. Strike Anywhere has a similar set up. Yeah, we want to do that. It's just an expense we can't afford for now. I think we're going to do it ultimately, though. I think it's a cool thing to do, between saving money, and knowing that we're out there and not polluting and beating up on the world!

Joe: Would you say there's an on going theme within your song writing?

Dave: Within from song to song?

Joe: Even just in general. Specifically, I've noticed some self-references between the records amongst the songs. I don't know if I'd call it repeating itself, but more like it comes full circle, so to speak.

Dave: You mean like the chorus figure that comes back?

Joe: Yeah.

Dave: The theme I felt I was working with on the record was desperation. There're a couple different themes overall but that was a main one; how it was sort of reforming my life and a lot of people's lives around me while I was writing that record. The desperation of losing my Mom, the desperation of losing my Grandpa, the desperation of being a little older and having all these responsibilities, but yet still trying to remain passionate about doing what we do on this level—which is such a struggle—and so hard. But, yeah, I tried to make sure that those themes were running cohesively throughout the record. And the EP was certainly meant as sort of an introduction to what became *Keep Your Heart*.

Joe: Since you've already had so much previous experience, do you feel like you go about things differently with being in a band now?

Dave: Oh yeah, absolutely. To the world, The Loved Ones is a brand new band, and it is. But the thing is, we all have experience being in bands, playing music, touring, booking shows, and we all know

got cooking, I had to make a conscious decision that I really couldn't keep up with both bands. My heart wasn't really into Paint It Black by the time I was leaving. Those guys are my great pals and I love them dearly, and I think Dan (Yemin) is a great songwriter and a great person, but the style of music to me, I was just starting to get a little bit... it just wasn't doing anything for me, that's all. I wasn't bored or anything, but it wasn't just quite what I wanted to be doing. There aren't enough hours in the day, and I feel like I was doing so much with The Loved Ones that I had to part ways with those guys. I think it's a cool culture we have in Philly. I guess you could call it incestuous. It probably bums some people out—the fact that we've all been in each others bands—and it makes it a little easier for everyone to get shows and do things, and gives us a little bit of an edge. It's not something I'm all that concerned about. I feel fortunate about it, to be part of a community like that.



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Interview by Todd Taylor and Ryan Leach
Photos by Todd Taylor
Intro by Ryan Leach

Today was fucking horrible. I woke up at 10:30 AM for band practice only to find the drummer and lead guitar player unavailable. That scratched, I went to the record store. Nothing there. Came home and played bass, seeing as my two pals couldn't show up (I had to get my fill, right?). The fucking compact disc player (a device I hold in low regard) wouldn't play the album I wanted to pluck along to, so I fucking broke it with my Fender. I punched it a few times afterwards; my knuckles are still sore. The mercury in the thermometer outside was somewhere in the stratosphere by noon, shot up by the sweltering heat outside with the knowledge that the current L.A. punk/rock scene now receives six calls from Hospice a day, wondering if the morphine they left could be retrieved for other terminal patients. Earlier tonight I went to the book store and found that AFI douchebag looking more and more like a Suicide Girl and formerly esoteric zines turning overtly mainstream. I've been seriously fucking losing it lately and the only things holding me together right now, in terms of music, are my dusty Captain Beefheart albums and Larry Hardy's *In The Red Records*.

For the benighted, *In The Red* is what's going on; not much else matters. This is not conducive to just the present—look back and you'll spot the same thing: one or two labels with a roster of artists towering over all others (Paramount in the '20s; Sun and Chess in the '50s; ESP and Stax in the '60s; Stiff in the '70s; Factory

and maybe Twin/Tone in the '80s; Crypt in the '90s). It takes one or two talents to galvanize a scene (i.e. Peter Laughner and David Thomas of mid-'70s Cleveland proto-punk band Rocket From The Tombs) and one of these labels to foster and nurture it. With a golden ear, Hardy has built strong friendships and provided a home for scene mavens like Greg Cartwright, Mick Collins, Miss Alex White, the boys in the Deadly Snakes, and those crazy guys and gal in the Lost Sounds (RIP, right?). Any one of these bands would be the cornerstone of another label's roster; Hardy has them all. He has provided a safe haven for these unique talents to do whatever the fuck they want. I mean, look at Captain Beefheart—one of my all time heroes—and listen to *Trout Mask Replica*—an album he had full creative control over—and tell me how that could have been possible with an unsympathetic major label (the record was put out by pal Frank Zappa). Like good old Uncle Zappa (or most of the other aforementioned labels listed), Hardy's label is a reprieve from all that demographic/psychographic marketing bullshit. Larry just puts out artistically rich records he likes, albums that sell one twentieth the amount of, say, Fall Out Boy, but artistically trump the *Alternative Press* cover boys like the Velvet Underground do Captain and Tennille. So don't be surprised twenty years from now when you're sitting on your couch and spot Larry on some dumb VH1 special, talking about the salad days and the Reigning Sound's *Too Much Guitar*. Mark my prophetic words, friends, it'll happen.

Ryan: We were talking about this earlier: you're a pretty young guy and you were involved in the L.A. punk scene early on.

Larry: I just went to shows. I wasn't really involved. I just went and saw bands. I was lucky that I knew older guys who turned me onto stuff. I got to see the Germs when I was like thirteen or fourteen.

Ryan: People who collect records, or are really into music, they typically choose to play an instrument or write about it; or if you're Peter Laughner you do both. (Peter Laughner was the guitarist of Rocket From The Tombs and played on Pere Ubu's first two singles. He wrote for *Creem* magazine and was good pals with rock critic Lester Bangs. Laughner solidified his present-day cult status by maxing out his body—via his addiction to amphetamines and alcohol—in 1977 at the ripe old age of twenty four. To say he was

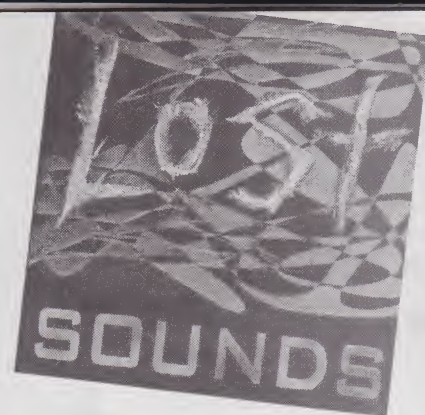
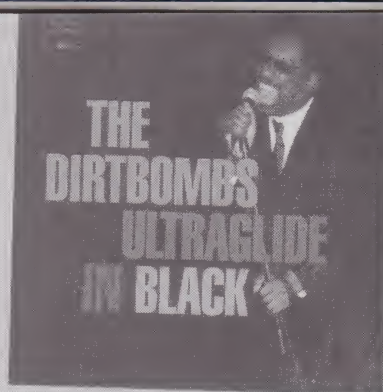
immensely talented and somewhat gullible is an understatement.) You chose to go down the road less traveled—starting a record label. When did that come to mind?

Larry: Later. I wanted to do something involved with music. I never had any aspirations to be in a band or get onstage in front of people or write a song or anything like that. I just liked music a lot. I liked records. I was buying records, so I thought it'd be a cool idea to actually make some. It was one way that I could actually get involved in music that was suitable to my personality.

Ryan: So when did that take place? When did you get the idea, the germ, for *In The Red*?

Larry: '91. That's when I first started trying to get the ball rolling.

Todd: You felt drawn into participating?



Larry: Yeah, exactly. I kept going to shows and at the time I was going out with a girl, Mary, who was in a band and a lot of my friends were musicians. And I was friends with the guy that did Sympathy For The Record Industry (Long Gone John) and the guy who did Crypt (Tim Warren), and knowing, all these people, because were all into the same kind of music, I thought it'd be cool to do something, something to justify my existence, hanging around with these people.

I pretty much do it for myself, whether it makes money or loses money.

Ryan: So what were you doing at that time? I imagine it must have taken a while to at least break even.

Larry: Yeah, I was working a crappy job. I thought I was just going to put out some 45s.

Todd: What were your first releases?

Larry: The first band I contacted, the whole reason I started the label, was I heard The Gories and I was really into them. I was blown away by their record. I thought, "This is the band!" A lot of the time—like I was

friends with John at Sympathy—and I would tell him about some band I'd heard and say, "You should do a record with them," and then he would do it; and it was like, "I could probably do that, too!"

Todd: Wait, I need to do a record for myself.

Larry: When I heard The Gories, I was like, "Ah, this is the one that'd I'd want to take credit for. If they say 'yes,' I'll do some records." Because there were a couple of other bands that I also liked, and if they said "yes," I'll do it. And The Gories said, "Yes." But they took like a year to get me the single, so the first thing I actually released was by



The Morlocks, which was this other sort of garage band that were actually broken up and it was like: "We have a single in the can if you want it." I liked them, too.

Ryan: They were part of that paisley thing, weren't they? (The Paisley Underground was an early/mid '80s L.A. rock movement. Its primary influences were '60s folk-rock acts—bands like the Byrds and Love—and punk rock's do-it-yourself aesthetic).

Larry: Sort of. They were more Stooges. In fact, the single they gave me was almost a bit metal. I was kind of disappointed: "All right, I'll put it out. This is not The Gories." But they had done records prior to that that I really liked, that were sort of noisy. They were ballsy and crazy.

Todd: What couple of lessons did you learn early on, starting off, that you wish you knew—like how you didn't get what you expected with The Morlocks?

Larry: Well, I guess that would be the first lesson. There were a couple things that I did when I was impatient, waiting for The Gories, that afterwards I was like, "Ah, I shouldn't have done that." So then it was: "Yeah, I won't release anything that I don't like personally," even though lots of stuff I like personally most people don't. So as long as I like it, then I'll never be ashamed of anything. Because of that, I've never put out records that I've regretted or winced when I look at them; it has always been something that I like. I pretty much do it for myself, whether it makes money or loses money.

Ryan: You said you released that Morlocks single in '91. That's the first year CDs overshadowed records, in terms of sales.

Larry: Yeah.

Ryan: Personally, were you a proponent of CDs or have you always been weary of them?

Larry: I was initially. I'm not anymore. At first, it was like, "I don't need digital clarity to listen to the Stooges." They sold CDs on this premise that there was "no surface noise; it's so crystal clear." Well, most of the music I like... a Bo Diddley record sounds better with surface noise. So it didn't matter that much. I'm not a purist for vinyl, either. It's cool having a CD that has seventy-eight minutes worth of music on it, especially if you're buying old compilations of '50s songs. And it's like, "I've got thirty songs on



Jay Reatard • photo by Miss Erika

this one thing and I didn't have to go out and buy rare 45s to get it."

Todd: I found out that CDs are very utilitarian. You can burn a copy and travel around with it. "Oh, I just dropped it. No big deal."

Larry: Yeah, they're kind of like cassettes now. They seem almost disposable. And now it has come around full circle, where I release a new album and people are downloading it off of Soulseek for free, but they'll buy the vinyl. So I'm selling a lot more vinyl in the last year or two. People are just



digitally downloading things legally or illegally, usually illegally. I mean, I do it myself on occasion if it's a song I want and can't find it. Just go to Soulseek and it's always there. Luckily, there are people

who got it for free but want an artifact of the real deal and buy the record.

Ryan: Records are just a tactile object.

Larry: Yeah, and the artwork is bigger. You grew up with it, too. I think it is just one of those things you like and don't want to let go of.

Todd: Ryan and I discussed this before: there's also a ceremony involved with it. You have this record. You have something very real and you see real things happening in front of you. And you can't do it all the time, but it's nice to have that reassurance that, "The music is actually a living, breathing thing."

Larry: Exactly. And turning over a record is a big deal. It adds a different personality to music. If you have *Exile on Main St.* and you're listening to four sides, it's like, "Side two is the kind of country side. Let's listen to that right now." But if you put in a CD, it's all eighteen songs.

Todd: And you zip right through it.

Larry: Yeah. There's a different dynamic to it, completely, if you have the patience to sit around and turn them over.

Ryan: Now it's almost like a legitimacy to have vinyl releases.

Larry: CDs are going to end up on your car dashboard. You're not as careful with them. At least I'm not.

Ryan: You use them as a coaster.

Larry: Yeah.

Todd: Or you go to a computer store and get a spool of blank CDs and realize they're ten cents a piece.

Larry: Yeah. It makes it hard to justify buying one for \$14.99.

Todd: Or downloading for \$14.99.

Larry: Yeah, exactly. I'm curious to see how it keeps going, because I think the new generation coming up is not going to care about owning the artifact of the record. It's only going to be an older crowd that buys it.

People like us.

Ryan: I'm still a kid, kind of. I was born the year *Combat Rock* came out.

Larry: Well that's good. There are a lot of young people I meet who I'm surprised that still buy vinyl.

Ryan: Yeah, I don't even buy CDs. I only buy vinyl.

Larry: That's cool. Do you have an iPod or iTunes?

Ryan: No. No cell phone. No iPod. Nothing.

Larry: Wow! Well, you're making a statement.

Ryan: [laughs] I just hope my car doesn't break down.

Todd: Going back to the beginning of In The Red: after you did the first initial releases, when did you feel that, "Oh, I'm doing a legitimate label" and quit your job?

Larry: I didn't quit the job for a few years later, like '96 or '97.

Todd: What was the job?

Larry: It was a job at a grocery store. I had been going to school and then I dropped out of college halfway through. I was studying fine arts. I kept the grocery store job and

then started the label. I kind of didn't know what I was going to do. And the record label snowballed. It was a gradual thing. When I was able to quit the job, that was cool.

Todd: What

were some of the bigger snowflakes on that snowball that made it?

Larry: It seemed like the big one—where my label got treated a bit more like a



legitimate label—was when I hooked up with Jon Spencer. He got popular and I had done a bunch of singles with the Blues Explosion and he had produced bands for my label. And I had done a Pussy Galore live album. And I had done a Boss Hog album when after they had been dropped from Geffen. Pretty much my association with that one guy, I think, is what did it. Free Kitten with Kim Gordon—they were offering me a single when I was a really tiny label still; I had done only a handful of singles. It was only because Jon was on there too, so she (Kim Gordon) figured, “You must be doing something right if you’re dealing with him.”

Ryan: How did you meet him? Just through going to shows all the time?

Larry: Yeah. There was this band called The Gibson Bros.—when I said I liked The Gories—were one of the first bands that I approached. I had these others on this list that, “If they say ‘yes,’ then I’ll do it.” And The Gibson Bros. were on the list. They were a similar band that were doing roots music but kind of fucked up. So I started writing to this guy in The Gibson Bros. And then, I was also a huge Pussy Galore fan, but I had no idea that Jon had joined The Gibson Bros. So they came out here on tour for the first time and he was in the band: “Hey! That’s crazy. The guy from Pussy Galore is in your group.” And then when I met him, he was a huge Gories fan. And one of the other bands I contacted was the Cheater Slicks, who were completely unknown and Jon was crazy about them too. So we liked all the same stuff. And, coincidentally, none of the bands had a base. And so, yeah, when the Blues Explosion had just started he gave me a cassette and said, “This is my new band.” And I really liked them a lot. So we just started writing and he asked, “Do you want to do a single?” And I said, “Yeah, totally.” And I just kind of kept going from there. We’re still good friends. We’re working on an album now, compiling the singles.

Todd: It seems like you have people you’ve been working with for a long time. Mick Collins was in The Gories, and you recently released that double album of The Dirtbombs.

Larry: Yeah, I’ve kept up with him. When you’re doing stuff on such a small level—if you’re really passionate about it—I think the bands can tell you genuinely like them. And then you become friends with them. And then when they come through town they’re sleeping at your house. They become your buddies. I’ve been friends with Mick Collins for ten years. He has hung out with my Mom and stuff. It’s cool. And if you don’t screw anyone over, do any shifty deals, then there’s no reason for them not to keep dealing with you.

Ryan: That’s the thing I like about In The Red Records: when you see that label stamp on it, you know you’re gonna get something good; not to put you on the spot or anything, but it’s really cool. You’ve done stuff where it’s like, “This is clearly not going to sell.” There’s no market for it, but because it’s a good record, you put it out anyway. One thing that comes to mind is that Consumers record you put out. Tell me how that came about.

Larry: Oh, fuck. When I was in high school, in Orange County, I had a buddy who hung around the 45 Grave crowd a bunch—pretty crazy crowd. And we would go to these parties at Paul Cutler and Dinah Cancer’s house. And we would be hanging out with these older people; it was definitely way out of my depth.

Ryan: Like Rob Ritter and all those crazy dudes.

Larry: Yeah. I remember going to this house party and Rob Ritter was there. Geza X was there. (Geza X was an early L.A. punk rock producer and the resident soundman of legendary venue the Masque. To put it mildly, Geza saw a lot and did a lot. In addition to music, he’s a noted leftist political activist.) And I was sixteen

or seventeen years old and I’m sure nobody wanted to talk to me. Don Bolles (drummer of the Germs) was there sort of DJing and going: “Here’s this Vox Pop thing that never came out.” They played that Consumers (demo) at this party and I was like, “Holy shit!” I knew the songs from 45 Grave, but these were different versions and I was blown away. And my friend, the same guy I was hanging out with, ended up living with Paul Cutler and Mary (Simms, AKA Dinah Cancer) a few years later and I was like, “Can you get me a copy of that cassette?” And so he sort of snuck it. He dubbed me one. And for years—like I said, I knew John at Sympathy before I had a label—I would always bug people: “Put this thing out!” No one cared. So when I got the label going, it was one of those things: “I’ve got to put that out. Someone has to put this out.” And so I did. I called Paul Cutler and asked him if he wanted to put it out.

We sold out what we pressed, which wasn’t a large number. But it didn’t lose money or anything.

Ryan: Yeah, because the Consumers just kind of fell off the face of the earth.

Larry: Well, they didn’t do much.

Ryan: Except raise hell.

Larry: Yeah, that was the other thing that I thought was so cool. I didn’t know anything about their history. And then when I met the guys, and started finding out about them, and got a bit of old press out of an old *Slash* and reread it, I was like, “Oh, these guys are trouble makers.” And when I was talking to them about the band, they told me that only two of the guys were still alive and they both work in the same cubicle at Golden Voice all these years later. Paul Cutler is brilliant. And the other guy, Mikey Borens, is really sharp and really funny.

Ryan: Paul Cutler was amazing. He was like Chris D. (Chris D. produced albums by the Gun Club, the Dream Syndicate, and the

I think it has just been luck. I'm kind of one of the last men standing that's still kind of doing this stuff.

The Dirtbombs



Flesh Eaters—a band he fronts to the present day.) He produced all those great records. He doesn't get enough credit. That guy is awesome.

Larry: He doesn't get enough credit for being one of the greatest guitar players to ever come out of this city. I remember watching 45 Grave. I just couldn't take my eyes off of him. No one played guitar like that in the punk scene.

Ryan: How about Rob Ritter on bass?

Larry: Yeah, he was no slouch either.

Ryan: Damn!

Larry: Yeah. That was a good era.

Ryan: That's true. You were talking about Mick Collins—that kind of leads me to Greg Cartwright. When did he first come to your attention?

Larry: He was drumming in a band I did a single with called '68 Comeback. The first time they ever toured out here is where I first met Greg. That was the guy, Jeff Evans, from The Gibson Bros. and The Gibson Bros. broke up right after I met Jeff. They splintered into a bunch of different bands. Jeff started '68 Comeback and he toured in California out here in a hearse with this band. Greg was the drummer, beating one snare. That's how he drummed. And he was the youngest guy in the group. And I became friends with him. And he said, "Yeah, I have this band called the Compulsive Gamblers." And then Jon Spencer told me a few months later: "We just played with this band and the guy from '68 Comeback is in it. They're called the Oblivians. You ought to do something with them." So I just got ahold of him. Then, just seeing him beat on one snare, I had no idea he could sing and write songs and do all this stuff incredibly.

Ryan: Like the reincarnation of everything good.

Larry: Yeah, yeah.

Ryan: Gene Clark, Ray Davies...

Larry: Yeah, he's like all of that rolled into one.

Todd: So was there any tension with your label and Crypt who released the Oblivians full-length?

Larry: No, because, at the time, I was still so small. I think I was the first label to approach the Oblivians; and they had just recorded that demo that pretty much wound up being *Soul Food*. And they let me take whatever songs I wanted off of it because no one had heard of them yet. But the owner of Crypt was a friend of mine and he had a bigger label than me—already releasing albums and he had all this crazy distribution. It never got competitive until maybe later when we were all on a similar playing field.

Todd: So how do you keep things so organized? It seems efficient. You don't seem like a big operation.

Larry: It's pretty small. I think by just paying attention to everything. Being passionate about it all helps. But shit still gets fucked up: The Black Lips are in Europe right now without tour merch. It wasn't my fault, but stuff still goes wrong.

Todd: What business things have you learned over the years? I really pay attention to staying passionate about what I do and pushing some of the business stuff aside, but then there are business-type things you really have to pay attention to if you just really want to exist.

Larry: Just not overspending or overextending myself on things, which, I guess, I haven't learned that much because I spent a lot of money on Sparks. But I think it will all come back. I have to pay attention. Like I said, we recorded last night's show because I shelled out some money and have to release something else to recoup what I spent. (Sparks had played the night before. Larry admitted to being kind of hung over. He hid it well.) Apart from that, I think a lot of it has been dumb luck. I could have started a label and nothing could have happened. In Europe, especially when I started, Europeans actually liked the Cheater Slicks and would

buy stuff on the label because it was a label that they know is being a certain sort of thing. No one bought the stuff in the U.S.

Todd: And Europe's more vinyl friendly all the way through.

Larry: Yeah, it has always been vinyl friendly and luckily that's kind of stayed true. And Crypt doesn't really do records anymore and Estrus is kind of slowing down so I'm kind of one of the last men standing that's still kind of doing this stuff. I think it has just been luck. It has always been snowballing and I always keep thinking it is going to stop, like I'm going to have to get some kind of real job working for the city eventually.

Todd: Something with a pension.

Larry: It just keeps going and I don't think it can forever. I've just been lucky. I try not to spend too much stupidly.

Ryan: I envision that being hard. I'm a huge Gene Clark fan and he released *No Other* and it pretty much put the record company out of business. And you have to face the situation like: "Wow! I really love this guy more than anything in life but I can't spend one hundred and fifty grand on this record."

Larry: Yeah. You have to learn to say no to people a bunch. Like I said, Sparks was one case where I really overextended myself compared to other things. But still, they sell enough records where I know at least most of it will come back. Like if I lose a thousand or two dollars on Sparks, it won't hurt me. I don't really think I will. I haven't gone crazy. They're a band that has been afforded a lot more luxurious backing than I've been able to offer them. I've kept it small by their standards; it's just bigger by my standards. I've dealt with this guy, Tav Falco of the Panther Burns, and I was warned before that he had sunk labels. And sure enough, the whole way it was me saying "no" to this guy. He was pushing for the most expensive stuff and I knew he didn't sell very many records.

Todd: Were there bands that approached you and you didn't like them, but that turned around over a period of time?

Larry: Oh, yeah. I passed on The White Stripes. I didn't do them but I could have. Financially, that was a mistake. There are other things that I regret passing on that didn't sell nearly as much, but I regret more because it ended up being a cool thing.

Todd: Like what?

Larry: Like the first Clone Defects album. I had it, listened to it once, and it didn't hit me for some reason. Then I went and listened to it again and was like, "What was I thinking?" It would have been cool to have White Stripes money, but I regret passing on the Clone Defects more. I wish that record had been on my label.

Ryan: You made up for it with the Reigning Sound.

Larry: I think so. No disrespect to Jack White.

Ryan: I'd take Cartwright over Jack White any day.

Larry: Me too. When I first heard The White Stripes, I wasn't that knocked out. Since, now that they've released a lot more stuff, I've heard songs where it's like, "That's great. The guy is clearly really talented." But from the little bit I heard, when I first heard it, it didn't, for whatever reason, jump out at me.

Ryan: Correct me if I'm wrong, but the first Reigning Sound record is not on In The Red.

Larry: No, it's on Sympathy. I don't know if Greg was viewing it as a solo project; that first album is mostly all ballads. And I was doing The Deadly Snakes and Greg was in them at the time. And he told me, "I just did this record. I think I'm going to give it to Sympathy."



But now it looks like we're kind of starting up as a real band and it's gonna be more rockin'. Do you want to work with him, too?" So I kind of had a deal going with the Reigning Sound before that first record was even released. I'd pretty much do anything with Greg or Mick Collins. Whatever sort of weird thing they'd start, I'd definitely sign up to do it. I don't care if it's all ballads or whatever.

Ryan: His ballads are good! *Time Bomb High School* is amazing.

Larry: Yeah, the second album (for In The Red Records) was originally supposed to be half ballads, too, and then we scrapped a ton of stuff that was recorded and made it *Too Much Guitar*; and made it more of a blistering record.

Ryan: What did you think of that when you first got it?

Larry: I love the ballads—and he's so good at them—but my allegiance is always sort of toward noisy rock'n'roll. So it kind of worked out. And we gave all the ballads that we cut off the record to Sympathy and Long Gone John put out those as *Home for Orphans*. So, I think Greg has kind of established this pattern where it will be 'I get the rock'n'roll records and maybe Sympathy gets the mellow records.

Ryan: That's the thing about Greg—not only does he write these great records, but his production job on them is rad. I always thought he was fucking with people on that one. Like, it wasn't accessible, but if you really listen to it, it's the greatest production job since that Compulsive Gamblers' *Crystal*

Gazing/Luck Amazing album, with Jim Diamond producing.

Larry: That would be the biggest regret I have of something I passed on, because I paid for the recording of it.

Ryan: Oh no! Oh no! That record is awesome!

Larry: I know. I know.

Ryan: Oh man!

Larry: I would have been stepping on Sympathy's toes to do it. Long Gone John had some deal with them where they owed him another record. And they recorded that on my dime, because I was paying them for participating on this Andre Williams record that they backed him on a couple songs. They recorded that record fast and cheap. And then when I saw them out here on tour they were like, "Well, we want you to put it out"; and I was jumping up and down. And when I mentioned it to John at Sympathy, and he was not happy. I figured it wasn't worth a friendship. But I think I made up for it with the Reigning Sound. That production, though, the really harsh songs, like the first ones on *Too Much Guitar*, I know that's what Greg had in mind, but Jay and Alicja from the Lost Sounds—mostly Alicja—produced that.

Ryan: Really? I didn't know that.

Larry: Yeah. Half that album was scrapped and they went back and recorded all this other stuff in Greg's record store. And Alicja and Jay went in and recorded him. Alicja is really good at getting crazy sounds. She accommodated Greg on getting some of the harsh stuff.

Todd: Yeah, she seems to understand what people are trying to get to.

Larry: Definitely.

Todd: And she's in so many different bands, too, that she'll pull a nuance out of something.

Larry: Yeah, she is really, really talented. Both she and Jay kind of blew me away when I met them with how much they knew. Greg is more "set a mic up in front of an amp and just go for it," but those guys can get something really professional sounding



The Lost Sounds

on crappy equipment; get something really harsh sounding.

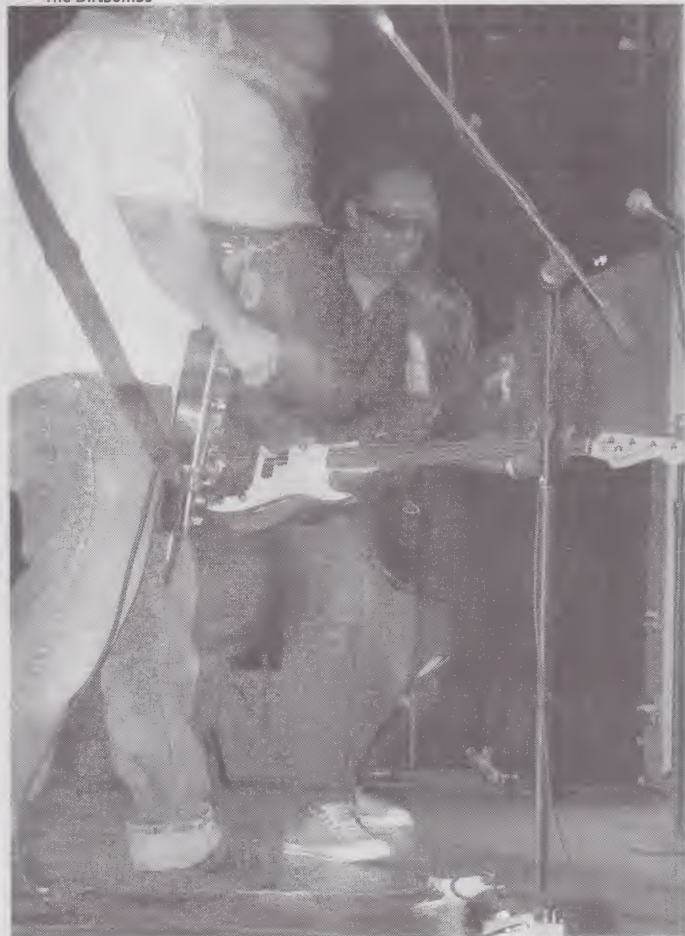
Todd: So you said you were a bit nervous about signing Sparks. Can you explain that and the overall concept of In The Red Records?

Larry: Yeah, I was just nervous that I was stepping way above my station. That was a band that I had seen on TV as a kid.

Ryan: That was on the *Valley Girl* soundtrack.

Larry: Yeah, I saw them on *American Bandstand* and *Don Kirschner's Rock Concert*. I knew that they had had hits and I know what that's like when you sign onto this tiny label that can't do all this stuff. They were one of my favorite bands and I don't want to be a big disappointment to one of these heroes of mine. I could ruin it to where I couldn't ever listen to them, where I'm like, "Oh, they hate me!" So I was worried about that: "Oh, I can't do this." And I met with them and they seemed open to dealing with a small label. They're really smart guys. And I thought, "Kudos to them for being that adventurous to work with me. That's amazing." And then I also thought, "This really doesn't fit the criteria of my label but, in a way, it kind of does. I see everything on my label being fairly eccentric and idiosyncratic. There's straight-ahead stuff like Greg Cartwright but I also work with weirdos like the Piranhas and the Country Teasers. And Sparks has always been outside the box, which is probably why they haven't been more successful. So I thought, "Yeah, it does kind of fit." They're one of my favorite L.A. bands ever and I'm an L.A. label that rarely works with L.A. bands, so I felt that this would be really cool.

The Dirtbombs



The lie became the truth...



Interview by Todd Taylor
Pictures by Todd Taylor and Stacy Schrag

I'M GOING OUT ON A LIMB HERE and am going to guess that Blöödhag is the only band to have played the Nebula science fiction awards, rocked the young adults section of a library, and have been featured in both the *American Library Journal* and *Thrasher*.

If you believe something you love is exploited, overexposed, too comfortable, or run into the ground, look for the seams. Search for the cultural stitching at the edges. Examine and pick at those edges. Seams are where worlds—of thoughts, ideas, mental and musical geography—meet.

It's a fuzzy world where tension and discovery can still exist because the seams haven't been claimed. (And the real bonus is that those with little or no imagination don't even know this netherworld exists.)

To the outside world, the words "literacy" and "punk rock" may seem mutually exclusive, as in, "Punks are brickbrains. End of story." Not so. It's in these seams, between these words and worlds, that Blöödhag exist. Blöödhag aren't a joke. They're a bonafide, ten-year-running DIY punk band who've become very concerned that people read. It's



Professor J. B. Stratton
Vocals, book distribution

Sir Zachary Orgel
Bass, fact checking

Amb. Brent Carpenter
Drums, propaganda

Dr. J.M. McNulty
Guitar, motor pool

become their mission. To fulfill their goals, they've played plenty a library, baptized many a new reader with a thrown book, blasted many a face with their firebrand form of metal, and have devoted 100% of their lyrical content to the celebration of their favorite science fiction authors.

Blöðhag is holding their imagination aloft like a battle-scarred sword, wagging its tip to you, humble music aficionado and discerning reader.

Todd: How serious are you guys about literacy?

Jake: When the band started, the message was to illuminate the connection between heavy metal and science fiction and fantasy so that heavy metal fans could properly appreciate the authors that the science fiction—that they were being exposed to through heavy metal—derived from.

Jeff: So they could understand the references where these things are coming from and not just assume that these bands made these things up.

Jake: And, as we progressed as a band in terms of performance, we ended up playing our first library show and it sort of synched in with that. What we're really talking about here is trying to get people to read. We were trying to get those metal fans to read in the first place, so we might as well just try to get everybody to read.

Jeff: The idea of literacy when we started Blöðhag was really not—I have to admit—even in our minds. We just assumed that we were already literate, so we were like, "No, here's how literate we are." Then it became, "Woah, not only are we being asked to play library shows, but now we actually have to take ourselves seriously. The lie became the truth and it's worked out.

Jake: Both my parents, being librarians, and my mom, at one point, being involved in an adult literacy program—which I didn't really have any connection with at all—I think the whole supporting libraries, supporting literacy, that has been sitting in the back of my head for awhile and it just kind of came out.

Todd: Why did you guys decide on the name Blöðhag?

Jeff: It was going to be that or Morbid Aphid. Seriously.



Science fiction helped me be more of a punk rocker and an anarchist in the first place. It's allowed me concepts that I'd never thought of before.

Jake: We had a whole list of really bad band names.

Jeff: We'd sit at pubs, when we were drinking before punk shows, and make this ultimate list of band names. Jake had a napkin that we started at the Lake Union Pub and he kept because of the band names we thought were so great. We kept adding on to them. Blöðhag was the most nonsensical one. That was a mental contest. In my opinion, good metal band names are sort of ridiculous. Slayer. Metallica is the most ridiculous metal name of all time. It's stupid.

Zach: But it works so well.

Jeff: They're the most popular metal band ever.

Jake: And it ends in "licca." The only other thing that ends in "licca" is "My Friend Flicka." [laughs]



photo by Stacy Schrag

Todd: Jake; so, you're trying to promote literacy and a little bit of smarts into music...

Jake: I think what you're getting at is the fact that I'm completely unintelligible when I sing and yet I claim to be promoting literacy.

Todd: Yeah.

Jake: How can the audience possibly get into the people I'm singing about if they can't understand what I'm saying? I figured that when we perform live, you get the blanks filled in. I tell you what author we're doing. I tell you a little bit about that guy or gal.

Jeff: Sometimes we even have arguments with the audience and they teach us a few things.

Jake: A quick little book club before every song.

Brent: And, go figure, that sci fi fans are staunchly opinionated.

Jake: We could be doing a song about a great author and, still, someone will be piping up, and going, "He was a misogynist!"

Jeff: "I found her pedantic!"

Zach: That makes it fun.

Jake: My official explanation is: being that I can't be understood, it forces you to read my lyrics, thus forcing you further into literacy.

Jeff: Anybody who listens to death metal can tell what he's saying.

Jake: I've been listening to metal for years and years and every metal album I'll listen to, I have to listen to it at least twice to understand what the dude's saying. So, it's not unusual. I think that a lot of people figure that I'm not saying anything because I'm doing the total Cookie Monster type of deal and there's so many grind and thrash bands out there who have gone straight past bothering to have any lyrics and are just making pitch-mouthed noises.

Jake: Which I actually appreciate.

Jeff: I don't have any problem with that, as long as you're straight up about it and you're not pretending that this song is about something and then you're going, "Urrff, urrrff, orghh, urrrff."

Jake: That's my question back to you. When you see an indie rock band or a punk rock band, can you fuckin' understand what they're saying? Not half the time.

Todd: There's definitely an ear-tuning process: pitch, speed, how people phrase words.

Jake: I probably enunciate more on this new album (*Hell Bent for Letters*) than I

have on any previous album. The longer I spend time singing, the better I get at it. I have more control over my voice, where I feel more comfortable singing as opposed to leaning on the Cookie Monster as a crutch for the metal.

Todd: Say that Blöðhag really takes off and you can afford to do really great slash dumb stuff that would represent the band, either live or in an ongoing project. What would you do?

Zach: A really, really tricked-out Bookmobile that we could tour in.

Todd: Where the side would come down and open up to a stage?

Brent: Bookshelves all behind us.

Jake: If this could pay the rent, we'd be doing a hell of a lot more than we are. We all work full time jobs. We might still do this: the parody of WASP's *Animal F**k Like a Beast*, which is going to be called *R**d Like a Beast*, read like a beast, which would have the bloody book codpiece front cover. But I came up with another idea, for a t-shirt: a close-up of a heavy metal crotch, ala the Motley Crüe *Too Fast for Love*; a pair of tight jeans. The bulge in the crotch is actually a book; a paperback shoved down there. The cock bulge is a book bulge and the title of it is *Hard to Learn or Hard to Read*.

I would like to add a video projector. I sat and filmed, over my shoulder, myself reading a book for half an hour. Turn the page every once in awhile. Filled up the whole frame with two pages of a book. You didn't see anything, except for, occasionally, my finger turning the page, and we ran that through the whole thing. It was really cool to see us—'cause we were wearing the white shirts and ties, but letters from the book were all blown up, really huge all over us and on our faces. I thought that was a cool effect.

Jeff: I'd like to have our lyrics projected on stage. A bouncing ball.

Jake: If not the lyrics, a projected bio of the author. Pictures of the authors, book covers, suggested reading lists, short bio, and fill in the rest of the blanks. Because we still get people who don't think we're singing about authors.

Jeff: Even though we spent eleven, twelve songs, over and over, talking about each, separate person quite plainly.

Zach: We should have the lyrics projected and then have it in a really heavy Gothic script, so they were impossible to read.

Brent: We've already thought about expanding our merchandising prowess and it'd be called the Skullastic Book Club. It would be a fan club slash pro-literacy movement. Nerd-oriented stuff, too, like *Dungeon Master* shirts and "What Would Nietzsche Do?" shirts. A rip-off the "D.A.R.E. keep kids off drugs," but it just says, "R.E.A.D. It's almost like drugs." Stuff like that. All these ideas, they always get pushed to the back burner.

Jeff: I'd like more of an Iron Maiden-style stage show. Get three more people on stage with you, who are dressed as characters, hanging out.

photo by Stacy Schrag



We were trying to get those metal fans to read in the first place, so we might as well just try to get everybody to read.

Zach: Over the years, we've developed some characters.

Jake: Two characters were on our very first 45 cover.

Zach: It's the desiccated corpse of Isaac Asimov, or Izzy, and Dewey Decibel, the library robot...

Jake: ...who has turned rogue, and Izzy Asimov is mad at us because he thinks we're disrespecting science fiction.

Zach: Denigrating literature.

Jeff: He rose from the grave to fight us, so then Dewey Decibel has risen to the task of protecting Blöðhag, due to the three laws of robotics that Isaac Asimov himself wrote.

Jake: There's a special twist in his programming, where he's sworn to protect and uphold literacy.

Jeff: Since the rotting corpse of Izzy Asimov is not technically human anymore, he can kick his ass.

Jake: So, the very first 45 cover we did, *Dewey Decibel System*, was Izzy Asimov and Dewey Decibel in mortal combat, painted by my friend Jeff Sturgeon. The new character that is a combination of my original sketches and Gene Ha's final

artwork, is Barb Ryan (the libarbarian)—and she graces the cover of our new record—and she's holding up the severed head of the ogre George Bush. A huge battle is taking place to defend the public library and Blöðhag has passed. We died defending literacy. Barb Ryan has triumphed and holds the severed head aloft, signifying the victory of literacy, and America's library system, over the ogre. I strongly suggest going to a comics professional to any metal band. They work on a deadline really well.

Todd: How important was Dungeons and Dragons in the formation of Blöðhag?

Zach: Not for the band. We were all good. We pretty much stopped, right around puberty.

Jake: Not puberty.

Brent: Jake was the long runner of the team.

Jeff: I played until I was a sophomore or a junior.

Jake: I played D & D and every sort of permutation of role-playing game. Gamma Wolf. DC Super Heroes. Marvel Super Heroes. I belonged to two different D & D groups. My high school friends; we played straight-up D & D and got high the whole time and got drunk and got into

huge semantic arguments about D & D rules but never did anything and it was the sloppiest, worse way you could play the game. Then I played with a bunch of really smart guys in the city and we had these great games that any one of them, if we frickin' transcribed them, would be a best-selling science fiction novel. These guys were good. Part of this crew of gamers was Gene Ha, who did our current album cover. Him and Art Lion, another of our group, are the only ones who actually made it big in the comic business.

Todd: How did you guys get an actual, physical hardbound Blöðhag book?

Jeff: Jacob McMurray from EMP Science Fiction Museum. He's a curator. The other curator from EMP Science Fiction Museum is also part of Payseur and Schmidt. Alice Schmidt. Jacob wanted to do a Thomas M. Disch split with us. It was originally just going to be 7" with a little booklet.

Brent: Now, he's been getting into book binding in the last couple years, just kind of dreamed it up. We gave him the audio four years ago. It's been done and in the can forever.

Jeff: It was us sitting around with Jacob and somebody was like, "You know what would be super hilarious, would be if we wrote stories

under our names." It was a wish and he ran with it, unbeknownst to us.

Zach: It's a pretty amazing book. There are three hundred of them and everything about them is just beautiful.

Jeff: Blöðhag, when we first started, and still, to this day, we maintain in all of our press, that we're published authors, well known in our various sub genres of science fiction. The idea was to finally show our stuff and write excerpts from our supposed novels in our supposed styles. Nothing else, even if you hate our stories, we wrote in the styles that our characters were supposed to be writing in.

Todd: Let's talk about credibility for the band. You guys have performed the Hugo awards?

All: Nebula.

Zach: Hugos are chosen by fans. Nebulas are chosen by authors. You have to be part of the guild or whatever.

Jake: The audience, when we played the Nebula awards, was probably 90% pros and only 10% fans. They were there with their peers to see if they got the award.



photo by Stacy Schrag

Todd: How'd they take Blöðhag?

Jake: They smiled the whole way through.

Jeff: We did a lot of explaining between songs. We did less talking about the author.

Zach: Because we figured they knew.

Jeff: It was weird. Jake and I did it at the same time. We felt like we somehow unconsciously had to explain why we did what we do to these people.

Jake: We broke character a little bit. I was just like, "This is why I play like this." Because it was perfectly appropriate because it was all pros in the room.

Todd: Do you guys know any parallels between professional wrestling and national politics?

Jake: Wrestling is always a good barometer for social observation and political leanings. I think there is a direct link, of not what is actually being performed in the wrestling, but in terms of the backstage politics of wrestling. The way the WWE is being run is a lot like the country is being run right now

because Vince McMahon is doing exactly what he wants to do against what everybody in the industry is telling him is a bad idea. And that's the way he's always approached things. It's kind of like what George Bush is doing. It doesn't matter if it's illegal or not.

Todd: What's been the ultimate moment for you in Blöðhag?

Jeff: For me, it happened quite recently. We got a great review. I've always kind of complained that... at first, we sucked. Okay, I'm going to admit that. But then I spent nine years figuring out how to play guitar and crafting songs and, yet, no one ever once mentioned that our music was badass until about a year ago. And people actually started noticing, "Oh god. You guys are a really good band." There was a thing in the *Portland Mercury*, and the guy said that: "They've moved beyond shtick and they're actually a really ripping band." For me, personally, as a songwriter and as a musician, that made me say, "Thank fucking

god somebody finally noticed that what I was trying to do was something that was actually decent."

Jake: I think what had been the ultimate moment for me is when they had the first article on us on National Public Radio and they had the voice of NPR reading my lyrics. I was so gleeful about that. I was lying in my bed. It was nine o'clock in the morning and I was gripping my sheets. I was pulling them off the bed, kicking my legs, and squealing like a girl.

Jeff: It was absolutely incomprehensible to me that that guy read Jake's lyrics.

Brent: My favorite Blöðhag moment so far is the time we played the Nebula awards in Seattle and Harlan Ellison shook all our hands as he was leaving the room, before our performance, and he told us he hadn't had a drink in ten hours and that he was going straight to the bar. That's why he was going to miss our performance. He made fun of Jeff's hair and asked him what he was doing with his little pompadour thing and touched it. And then he's like, "Oh, you're the drummer?" to me. When he was shaking my hand, he felt my forearm. He had me feel his forearm and I was like, "Wow. Nice guns." And he said, "It's all from masturbating and writing." He totally stuck out like a sore thumb in that whole group of people. And he had a big, bright orange sweater on. Ridiculous.

Jeff: I just expected him to punch us. But the cool thing is that we were just sitting there and he made a point to come over and talk to us. That was a special thing to me.

Jake: We've been talked about in the *American Library Journal*.

Zach: *Science Fiction Writers of America* magazine, too.

Jeff: Weirdest band list of accomplishments.

Zach: Perseverance. That's what that is. Ten years.

Todd: You feel like a veteran after awhile.

Brent: All of a sudden, people revere you as, "He's been at it." And take you seriously. You've paid your dues a little bit.

Todd: What other science fiction authors have you come in contact with? Ursula K. LeGuinn?

Zach: Kurt Vonnegut. I emailed Michael Moorcock.

Jeff: William Gibson, Greg Bear, Harlan Ellison.

Jake: We've met Octavia Butler at a reading. I gave her a CD with a burn of our song about her. She was looking at me like I was going to stab her. I was explaining it to her, then her handler was all lit up: "No, this is cool." That's what these authors' biggest fear is, is some kind of *Misery* situation, some type of celebrity fan. It's a totally different type of celebrity fan because even sometimes your biggest fan wouldn't necessarily recognize you, standing next to you on the street, because they only know you from that one book jacket photo. It could be twenty years old. Hiding in plain sight.

Jeff: Also, the people who do know you by sight have got to be complete nerds.

Jake: I've passed women who've looked just like J.K. Rowling ten times today. William Gibson was awesome because when we met him, we explained to him what we did and we handed him our CD. He autographed our CD and handed it back to us. [laughter]

Jeff: We were like, "No, that's for you." And he's like, "What do you mean?" "Open it up. Look. There you are."

Zach: The first thing he said was, "You do a Neal Stephenson song?"

Jeff: He was more stoked on that 'cause he's good friends with Neal.

Jake: And then he said, "What an extraordinarily unusual thing for someone to do." I'm like, that's high praise right there, when a guy with a really good imagination tells you that what you're doing is weird, hell yeah.

Todd: Jeff, you've said before that Blöödhag

Todd: Okay. I want to establish a direct link to punk rockers right now. How is reading a step beyond solely listening to music?

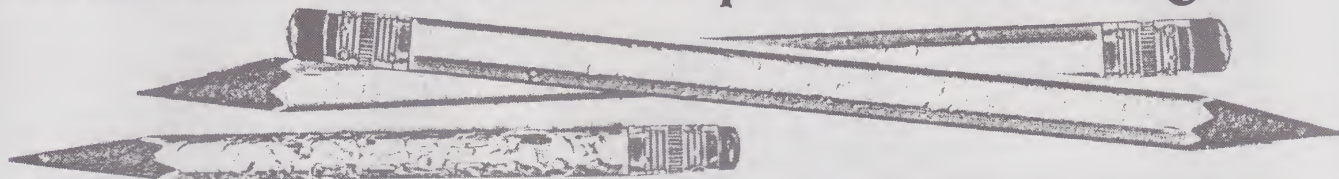
Jeff: The only way—Ray Bradbury's said it—you can actually teach yourself something is if you're literate; above and beyond a skill. The only way you can bring knowledge from somewhere else into yourself is through reading. I don't care if it's on the internet, you're still fuckin' reading. The Quakers, who were formative of the United States, believed that a 100% literacy rate is the best way to have a free society so people can make their own choices and make their own opinions. What's important to me about punk rock is I'm allowed to be myself, no matter who I am. We're, all four, completely different individuals, and yet we all respect each other and we know each other because of punk rock. Of course, there is the lunkhead aspect of punk rock.

thing about punk rock that gives me faith and makes me happy: there's always someone new, who's not being forced into, starting out.

Jeff: Real punk rock is based on intelligence and teaching yourself from reading is exactly like teaching yourself how to play bass guitar. In fact, in my opinion, punk rock is actually about imparting knowledge to people. Riot grrrls. Political or gender issues. It's a great way to gather a certain type of culture around you. In Seattle, there's a seriously big lesbian scene of punk rock. Mostly, the bands all play with each other. It's kind of an insular scene, but it does bring them together. The stuff that we grew up listening to: Scratch Acid, Nomeansno, Big Black—all these guys—they're smart motherfuckers. They really are nerds. Greg Ginn's a nerd.

Jake: I think a lot of punk rockers are hung up on that things have to be based in

Wrestling is always a good barometer for social observation and political leanings.



is often a gateway for punks to start reading. Does that still hold true?

Jeff: People have a shelf on their bookshelf that is a collection of books that they've gotten at Blöödhag shows. It doesn't necessarily say that they've read them, but it does say that they're thinking about it. Then there are random people who have said, "That book that you threw at me, I want you to know that I actually read it." People who are true Blöödhag fans, even if they're not big readers—it's almost more important to them if they're not big readers—make sure that they tell the band, "I read that book you threw out."

Zach: What I've found out, with the bands we've played with. Mostly, the harder the band, the more literate they are. Say, super doom, black metal, they've taken the time to look up some of the sources of where all that goth stuff is coming from.

Jeff: Plus, you kind of have to be a nerd to be into that music to a certain degree because you have to search it out and actually go and get it.

Jake: As we've said in the past, there's no difference between someone who's obsessed with music and someone's who's obsessed with sci fi.

Jeff: Or sports.

Jake: Hip hop. Anybody who tells you different, it's just a different level of nerdism. I like to think of myself as the Jack of all nerd trades.

Jake: Or that whole sort of nihilistic, Sex Pistols, sort of thing.

Jeff: That's fun and that's rock'n'roll.

Jake: Unless you're going to commit suicide after the next show, you've got to go somewhere else with the material.

Zach: All surface, no depth.

Jake: We came up with Edu-Core as a response to the fragmentation of metal and punk into all these sub-pieces of punk: peace punk, posi punk, and when you ask two different people what these things mean, they both give you a different answer. Punk rock, different than pop music, is one of the only forms of music that instills a sense of its own history.

Zach: And hip hop, too.

Jake: The kids who are co-opted, that go to Hot Topic, and buy that shit, they still have to buy that patch that says Black Flag...

Jeff: Or Rancid...

Jake: Or DK or whatever on it, and that forces them, at some point, to figure out who these people are and maybe go that next step and find out a little bit more, whereas in pop music, if you're wearing a Britney Spears shirt twenty years after Britney Spears isn't cool anymore, then you're making some kind of ironic comment. No, it doesn't happen.

Zach: But punk and hip hop do have cultures around them. The best part of it encourages people to think for them-fucking-selves.

Todd: People can and have manufactured punk rock and have co-opted it, but the

reality, that punk rock is exclusively about street level stuff. It's only non-fiction. It's about politics. But, the deal is that there's non-fiction in fiction and there's fiction in non-fiction. Basically, by reading fiction, it allows you the imaginative spark to move past your reality. The deal is that once you start thinking exclusively based on facts, you lose your imagination.

Jeff: How can you think of a forward culture if you can't deal with fiction?

Jake: Fiction opens that thing in your head.

Jeff: It's not true yet, right? You're trying to make a change. That's not true yet, so you have to look forward.

Jake: You have to be able to imagine this future that you're looking at. I'm just saying that I've met a lot of people who don't read fiction. They just read newspapers, magazines, poli-sci treatises. You read other people's opinions about things and you're not allowed to break out from there.

Zach: Sci fi—which a lot of people in the business, they hate that term—but it's speculative fiction. We're living in Philip K. Dick's world.

Jeff: People wear outlandish clothes. It's just not the actual ones he talked about.

Brent: I just paid a quarter to get into the bathroom. I felt *Ubik* right now.

Zach: Speculative fiction, the good stuff, whether it's set in the present or the past or the far future, is good at examining some sort of human condition, but a lot of the

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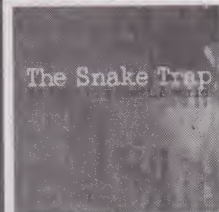
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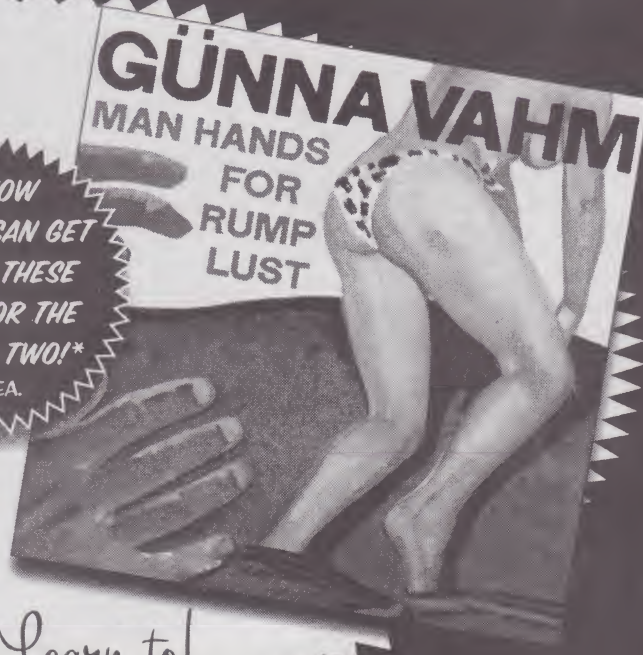
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Go figure. Sci fi fans are staunchly opinionated.

time, just mental, it changes something in the physical world. Predicts it.

Jeff: When you predict something that is mind-expanding. When I was twelve and read *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein, the fact that they were doing things that my parents and my whole family—and everybody before me that had come to create my little twelve-year-old person—would think that this is wrong, and yet I was reading this thing and at the

end of it, it changed my mind. To come up with a concept that actually changes your viewpoint of the world, that is the power of reading really good science fiction. A huge portion of who I am, it has a lot to do with the science fiction that I've read. It really allowed me to have my own personality and think in a futuristic manner to where I could be: "I don't think this is right." I would say that science fiction actually helped me be more of a punk rocker and an anarchist in

the first place. It's allowed me concepts that I'd never thought of before.

Brent: I've always had an appreciation for the dystopian novel as social and political satire. George Orwell. Because there's so much there and it's a great way to bring up topics that may or may not be controversial in a way that you're not pointing fingers and you're not preaching. You're just getting out some ideas. That goes along with my favorite punk rock lyricists and bands, with concepts, even if they're doing political punk rock, the better ones are the ones that can put some humor and levity in the middle of it all or take on a persona instead of spelling it all out for you. Blöödhag's asking people to start other Edu-core bands that deal with educational topics. There should be bands about discoverers, inventors. Just run with it.

Zach: With the self-pigeon holing that we've done, it's liberating. There's never any question about what we're going to write about.

Jeff: The brackets that we've put ourselves in have freed us to the ultimate level.

Jake: The further we talk about punk rock is that when Blöödhag shows up at a show—we've all got short hair—and when we put on our shirts and ties, we're the outcasts. Nobody talks to us until after we're done. They won't even look at us. Everyone's either punked out or metallised out in their finery and if they look at us, they sneer. We're shut out until we come off stage and then they accept us. That just breaks it down for me how important the fashion aspect of it is to a lot of people who are involved in it because that's how they identify each other. It's really about them finding a niche. It's a youth thing. When you get older, you're going to wear Mom's Christmas reindeer sweater to the motherfucking show, and I'm going to pee myself.

Todd: But that's the funny thing: a lot of the punk lifers I know are just normal-looking people. It's gone inside. My feeling is that, I'm just not a fashionable guy. I appreciate it when other people do it and I'm not looking down on, but if that's all they have to offer, I kind of get disappointed.

Jeff: If kids watch the video of Black Flag and the Circle Jerks on *Decline of Western Civilization*, they would go, "Fuck. All this shit that I've been fuckin' doing, and my two favorite bands of that time, they looked exactly like nobody." You wouldn't have even noticed them when they walked into a room. They did not look punk at all. And then there's guys like The Accused. I like both sides of punk. I love that style shit.

Zach: It's the same with the style of a book. You can write it well or you can write it badly, but you need some style.

Jake: Even in my wrestling, I like showmen and technicians.

Todd: What do you guys do on a day-to-day basis?

Brent: I'm cooking food for a natural foods co-op grocery store in west Seattle. I work in the deli and cook food and talk

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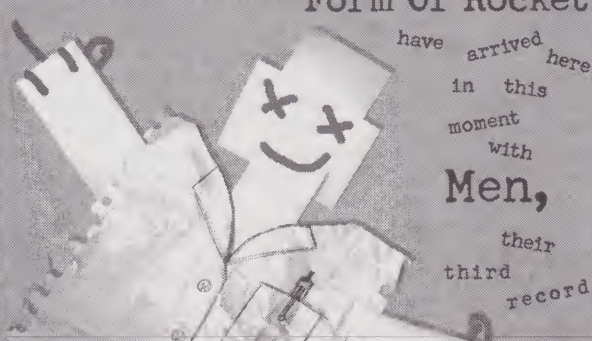
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When William Gibson,
a guy with a really good imagination,
tells you that what you're
doing is weird, hell yeah.

to customers about alternative foods. It's a pretty good job. It's weird though because I've worked in kitchens my whole life and now it's retail and working a kitchen job. I have to be stirring a soup and simultaneously watching the counter, so

it's kind of bizarre. I also screen print T-shirts for the band and do that in my basement. I play music in other side projects. In Audio Infidels, I sing and play guitar. I've got a big backyard and do the weeding.

Jake: I work at a book store chain. I got the job because I was in Blöðhag. It's a good job. I like working in a bookstore. I've only been working there for six months and I have to say I can't believe I never worked in a bookstore before. Prior to that, I was unemployed for long periods of time. I also announce for the Rat City Roller Girls rollerderby and I also occasionally do work with a small wrestling group in Seattle called Seattle Semi-Pro Wrestling. I used to announce full-time for them, but now I play a manager character. I really want to pursue doing announcing, perhaps radio work in the future. The band has led to me having a deeper voice and having more control over my voice to the point where I could do this announcing thing without any troubles. Something about jabbering about authors off the top of my head has made me a really fast play-by-play guy. I live with my girlfriend and we have a cat and an apartment with a mole problem.

Zach: I'm an accountant. I'm an enrolled agent, which means I'm licensed to practice before the IRS, so if you ever have any tax troubles, you can come to me. I spend my day—I work for really nice people—it's actually an awesome job because the people I work for are never unpleasant, even though it's occasionally boring being an accountant. I talk to the IRS for people a lot. It's mostly what I do. I'm married. I have a house and a beautiful backyard with a fig tree and a plum tree. I have three cats. I do a lot of Blöðhag. I read a lot. Watch a lot of TV. I'm probably the most settled of the Blöðhags.

Jeff: I wear many hats. My primary job, twenty hours a week, is I work at the Redmond Firehouse Teen Center, which doesn't pay the bills. I am the Media Lab Coordinator, which means that I'm in charge of the studio there and also, to a large degree, the whole sound teaching class. Basically, I started out teaching for the Vera Project. So, for two years in a row, I taught at this thing called Rock School, which teaches kids music and how to be in a rock band. We have kids develop their own songs. This year, I'm going to be teaching for the

EMP, which is a week-long thing. It's going to be fuckin' awesome, but it's making me be completely professional. I actually have to write a syllabus and a course description. I also work as a receptionist / business

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manager partner for a salon that's made up of people who are really, really close friends of mine. For three, four hours a day, I hang out with really cute girls cutting hair and really nice guys who cut hair, talk on the phone, jibber jabber. I've also recorded a shitload of bands and I engineered the new record.

Jake: Except, I was the one that actually pressed play, record, and stop. I didn't ask for any credit, though.

Todd: What do you find yourself thinking about the most?

Jake: Sex... when?

Todd: What's a recurring thing you don't stop thinking about?

Zach: I think a lot about the nature of identity. I think about other dimensions a lot. I'm really good at tuning other people out while I think about those things. I get caught in my own little world a lot. They're pretty weighty subjects.

Jake: I think a little bit of politics and then a lot of pro wrestling and I think about where words and phrases come from. I'm really into etymology recently; been reading a lot of books on that. When I hear somebody saying a colloquialism, it sticks in my brain. And then sex.

Brent: I think about skateparks all the time and I dream about skateparks. There are

too many skateparks and so little time. It's cutting into my reading time. It sucks.

Jeff: I think about gear. I'm obsessive about it. I'm not as geeky as some people. I'm not Steve Albini about it. I think about music a lot. Also, like Zach, I think about a lot of esoteric things, but I think of them more in a metaphysical manner and a little bit less of a scientific manner. I also think about history a lot and sex.

Zach: I'm an obsessive news junkie. I read the *New York Times* every day, online. I have my sites that I go to every day and read. Politics, occult, or scientific stuff are most of the links. I used to write a conspiracy theory column, so I think about conspiracies a lot. I'm really good at doing research.

Jake: That's why he's the fact checker of the band.

Todd: What keeps you going?

Jake: What keeps us going is the same thing that's kept us going the whole time, absolute lack of forward momentum.

Jeff: It's all through natural slacking.

Jake: We don't actively call anybody, but we're completely open to new things, so that if something pokes its head in, we grab it and ride that as long as we can.

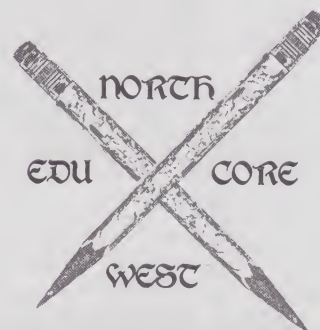
Jeff: It's a slow process.

Brent: At this point, the iron's hot. There's no reason to stop. We're kind of cruising through it. I think a smart audience can feel that, through stage presence, if a band is going through the motions for the sake of money or their image or to legitimize their lifestyle. When you see a band that's there because they love it, you can tell.

Zach: I love everything about Blöðhag. Great bunch of guys. I love the weird shit we get to do, that time we did that nation-wide library tour. I sent out a feeler to a couple people. "Hey, we're going to tour. We want to play some libraries." And we got three hundred requests to play libraries. That was just overwhelming. We did ten.

Jake: We're friends first and a band second. Jeff and I have been making music forever and we've never even thought of ourselves as "a band." It's just about collaboration between us and, whatever we want to call that stuff, great. We were fortunate enough to have good friends who we can add to this project and make it a reality for the last ten years. It's just the fact that we're pals that allows us to keep going.

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THE FEELERS

JON-GUITAR DAN-VOCALS
INTERVIEW by BEN LYBARGER

JOE-DRUMS ALEXS-GUITAR SEAN-BASS

PHOTOS by SHERRY CARDINO

LAYOUT by TODD TAYLOR and KEITH ROSSON

The first full-length by The Feelers was entitled *Learn to Hate the Feelers*, and apart from being a savvy stab at reverse psychology, that title pretty well encapsulates the band's unique mixture of sarcasm, self-deprecation, and humor. The band often gets labeled as playing Kill By Death-styled punk rock, and while there is a good deal of truth to that description, it also implies some amount of contrivance. However, The Feelers are far from happy to simply wave the banner of 1981. Instead, they carry that sound and spirit into the new millennia, working their own personal demons and artful innovations into the lo-fi garage punk archetype. Part of what makes a punk band vital to me is the catharsis, the feeling that they aren't just playing some songs, but are actually driven by some sort of compulsion or need to play those songs. That this is how they vent out their ugliness: in a fun, aesthetically pleasing way. The frustration of working shit jobs, of dealing with other people, of trying to find a point. That this is how they feel better, finding solace in the frenetic chords and amplified mutterings. It's sonic alchemy: turning the lemons of life into a hard lemonade. It is not how they try to look cool or "get the chicks." Every time I see The Feelers, I get that feeling.

While they are from Columbus, Ohio, virtually my backyard, the first time I saw The Feelers was at the Chicago Blackout. They played the day show at the Ice Factory, an odd show space in the middle of someone's apartment, which may have been a mechanic's garage at one time. I had a six-pack at my side and another in my stomach. The heat was heavy and the air was pungent with the scent of cigarettes, body odor, and baited breaths. They started, and this deranged singer with a tangled mane of sweaty hair and the strong beginnings of a fu manchu mustache lunged into the crowd wearing a "United We Stand" sweatshirt with the collar and sleeves cut off. It had an eagle soaring over the Twin Towers on wings made of American flags. It was majestic, inspiring, and balls-out cheesy. On the back he had written in marker: "Where's the Party At?" I didn't know what to think about these guys, but I definitely wasn't hating them. I later learned that the shirt was gag gift from a friend, and that Dan would not fully commit to the dirty biker look. As I got to know them more, I also learned that they are friendly, funny, up-front sort of folks, who drink a lot and sleep very little. This interview was done with them at the Kill The Hippies house before their show in Kent, Ohio.

Ben: There seems to be a certain richness and complexity to your compositions that contrasts with the vulgar instrumentation of a rock band. Are any of you classically trained? [Forced laughter from The Feelers, and fingers pointed at Aleks.]

Aleks: Yeah, I went to music school.

Ben: Did you really?

Aleks: Yes. Piano.

Jon: Back in the old country. (Aleks is from Chechnya)

Ben: How long did you take classes for?

Aleks: For seven years. Seven long, boring, forced-by-my-parents years.

Joe: What job did your dad have in the Communist government?

Aleks: He was actually working for the Ministry of Culture.

Jon: This is the part where we all find out about each other by asking each other random questions.

Aleks: Jon, are you queer?

Dan: We don't actually talk to each other.

Aleks: We sort of just come into the room and punch the clock and go to town.

Ben: You guys played the Horrible Fest in Cleveland a couple months ago. How was that experience?

Joe: Ahhh, it was terrible. Are we telling the truth in this interview?

Ben: You should.

Aleks: Do we have to break Ryan's heart?

Jon: We really like Ryan who set it up.

Aleks: How about that; we like Ryan.

Jon: But it was a bit much.

Aleks: There were too many bands.

Jon: It didn't all work out. We had fun, but it just didn't.

Aleks: Yeah, The Jabbers *really* didn't have to be there.

Jon: Ryan was a bit too ambitious.

Joe: Except their bass player looked like Hulk Hogan.

Ben: The Jabbers were the only ones who got paid that night, right?

Joe: Oh yeah. They were the only ones who got paid the whole weekend.

Aleks: Well, not really, but...

Joe: They used my drums, didn't thank me, and got all my money. [Pretends to be choked up about it.]

Aleks: But it was a fun weekend, we saw a lot of friends, blah, blah, blah.

Jon: A lot of good bands.

Joe: The best thing that happened all weekend, though, was when Jeffrey and Jemina turned on that Jabbers song when those douchebags were in the parking lot. They were all dancing to it...

Jon: We were all hanging out in the parking lot when the Jabbers showed up.

Aleks: As soon as the Jabbers rolled up and they are standing there—just sort of being the Jabbers and stuff—then, all of the sudden, the Jabbers start playing from the Rat Traps' van and April and Jemina run out and start dancing. [Mimics their comical dance moves.] And the Jabbers just sort of looked at them...

Joe: Then they picked up their shit and walked away. They were so pissed off. It was sweet.

Ben: So how long did the Rat Traps stay with you guys after their van broke down that weekend?

Aleks: Jeffrey and Jemina stayed for about two weeks. I took them to the bus station.

Sean: Joe stayed for a month.

Aleks: And April stayed for about three weeks. In between we had a band called

White On White Violence (aka W.O.W! Violence!) with Joe Simpson from the Rat Traps, Dan, and Jon and me.

Dan: It started because we were going to have to cancel a couple hours before a show because Joe and Sean couldn't play, but we decided to just fill in the Feelers slot with a made-up hardcore band. I was supposed to do corny freestyle political rants, trying to be like a high school political activist. "Paint the lawn of the Whitehouse red." Stuff like that.

Ben: Did you record something?

Aleks: We have a tape recording of that live show.

Jon: We are going to release it in like fifteen years.

Aleks: Go to Myspace and look us up: White On White Violence.

Joe: It was the first time there was a scene in Columbus in ten years.

Aleks: When those who weren't there will claim they were there and they saw the whole thing go down.

Joe: Yeah, in fifteen years there will have been 1,400 people there and Aleks will be thin again and it will be a totally sexy show.

Jon: This interview is starting to break down already.

Joe: Next time somebody needs a picture of us, I am gonna get them that picture of Aleks with his shirt unbuttoned playing acoustic guitar in Carlos' backyard, when you had long hair and a six-pack.

Ben: Cool. I'll need a picture for this. So when a band like the Rat Traps stays with you in Columbus, where do you take them to show them around the town? What's cool to see and do there?

Aleks: Nothing. Basically, the walk from the beer store to our house.

Sean: The UDF. (United Dairy Farmers)

Aleks: Yeah, the UDF and Bourbon Street. The nearest store to get beer, the closest bar, and occasionally a movie on TV: that's what we showed them.

Joe: Yeah, we showed them a great time.

Dan: We suck.

Joe: Some of them had sex in Jon's roommate's closet.

Jon: That's all I have to offer them. Come to Columbus, have sex in my roommate's closet.

Aleks: Not mine, because I don't even have a closet.

Ben: Are you guys aware that there's a '90s New Zealand band called The Feelers?

Joe: Oh yes.

Aleks: They are not '90s; they are current.

Joe: They were gonna sue us for a while.

Aleks: They actually posted a message on our message board...

Sean: Said they were gonna sue us if we didn't change our name.

Aleks: And there was a bunch of people

Jon: It was our West Coast tour that was horribly planned.

Ben: Yeah, I was wondering why you drove clear to Tucson to start your tour?

Aleks: Because of commitments.

Sean: Time restrictions.

Jon: And we're not smart.

Aleks: I go to school. Sean had his job and he goes to school.

Jon: We wanted to go west.

Joe: And we never even saw the ocean. We never saw the Pacific Ocean.

Aleks: Well, we saw the bay when we were crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. That's as close as we came.

Joe: And all the beautiful cranes and bulldozers and shit.

Aleks: When we were staying with Jenny from the Orphans, we were literally two blocks from the ocean and we never even bothered to go over there and look at it.

Dan: I fucking slept in the van.

Jon: To answer the question, we talked to Sean—who was flying out to Phoenix to meet us but he missed his flight—so we were all like, "What do we do?" So we

about the owners, told us about her baby at home, and whatever. Then it took forever to get food and everything. Then she collects the dishes and we were sitting, drinking, and deciding what to do about the show. We decided we were going to drive to Tucson and play the show with just the four of us. Then we realized that we haven't seen her for about an hour and a half at this point.

Joe: She quit. She fucking quit.

Aleks: Yeah, a couple guys walked in and asked what happened, and I guess she had walked out. So instead of just walking out on our bill, we went and told them exactly what we ordered, and the owner took half an hour to figure out his own register so he could take our money.

Jon: Smartest band ever.

Joe: We're just punk rock with manners.

Ben: I also read something about somebody shitting in trees?

Jon: That was totally me. Hell yeah. We were in Tucson and somebody had passed out in the bathroom on the toilet with their pants down. I don't want to say it's

"THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO OFFER THEM.
COME TO COLUMBUS,
HAVE SEX IN MY ROOMMATE'S CLOSET."

who just made fun of them, and we never heard from them again.

Jon: There was also a San Francisco band, apparently, in the late '80s/early '90s. We obviously did a lot of research. A lot of thought went into the name.

Joe: We actually know a lot more about the New Zealand Feelers than ourselves.

Sean: Or any of their fans.

Joe: Whoever those people are.

Ben: Have you ever actually heard them?

Aleks: I downloaded one of their songs on the internet.

Jon: It was kind of funny.

Aleks: A bit like Hootie And The Blowfish.

Jon: I'd like to do a split with them.

Ben: So what waitress at a Mexican restaurant did you guys talk into quitting?

Sean: I wasn't there, but I was responsible for the whole thing.

Aleks: We had to pick you up at the airport. It was in Phoenix, Arizona, at the culmination of our two-and-a-half day drive.

figured we'd go to this Mexican restaurant to eat and get drunk and talk about it, and it was like this girl's second or third day and she was dumb as...

Aleks: She was from a demographic we like to refer to as, well... we do mention trailers when we refer to that demographic. So she walked up to us with the menus and she complained that the names of the dishes were written out with English letters but they were Spanish names and she's like, "What the hell is wrong with them? They're in America!" And she was completely fucking serious. So she told us it was her second day and we explained to her our situation, that we were kind of jet-lagged but we're not gonna be assholes, because she was sort of nervous. She dropped beers like twice while she was bringing them to us.

Joe: Brought us like six Coronas when we ordered two margaritas.

Aleks: So it was kind of retarded. She complained about the menu, complained

a foreigner, but maybe it's a custom in his country. [Everyone looks at Aleks.]

Aleks: I don't remember any of this!

Dan: We got a picture of it, but I've never seen it. I don't think it got developed.

Jon: I think it was destroyed.

Aleks: It did get developed. It was not destroyed.

Jon: So there was this line of trees along the road we came in on about a block away, and I had to shit so badly, and there were dogs everywhere else. A line of trees works. I lost a pair of boxer shorts in the process, but I nailed it.

Ben: I understand you guys are upset about having to use public land? What is that about?

Dan: We call bullshit on craters, basically.

Aleks: This crater in Arizona. I was really pissed off. We were driving, still in Arizona. There was this sign to the biggest crater in the country, right? That thing was like six miles into the desert, but we had

some time to kill so I begged them to go there. You know, you have a chance to see something interesting...

Dan: Let's go look at a hole!

Aleks: It's still kind of cool.

Joe: It came from space!

Dan: It's a space hole!

Aleks: So we get there all excited. I run up to the gate and the lady tells me it's like fifteen bucks or something.

Joe: [In a mocking voice] Aleks wanted a balloon so badly, but he just couldn't get one. His lollipop was stuck to his face. It was so cute!

Aleks: The rock hit the fucking planet I was birthed on. I think I have a natural born right to see the fucking hole. It was privately owned by some fucking crazy businessman or something.

Dan: Exxon owns it or something.

Jon: And then we got sodomized by trannies. Wait. Sorry. That was a different state. My bad.

Aleks: We'll get to that in a second.

Dan: We're not fags. That happened in L.A...

Jon: Where it doesn't matter (if you're a fag or not). Either way, you're gonna get sodomized by a tranny in L.A.

Ben: Didn't you guys get your van broken into and your merch stolen?

Joe: Yeah, with Wade from the Orphans.

Dan: Wade drove to Ohio, stole our shit, threw it in the park, and drove back.

Ben: What?

Aleks: No, somebody just broke a window, got in the van...

Sean: And threw our 7"s on the ground.

Jon: We got some of our shit stolen, got some of it back, and it wasn't Wade. We love Wade. He has more coke than Motley Crüe.

Aleks: In his own words. In front of my aunt!

Joe: That was the first thing anybody said to us when we were in L.A. People were like, "You're not going to be able to play if you don't set up." It's like 10 o'clock,

so we were setting up, and I'm all pissed off, and we were all tired and shit. Then Wade jumps up like a superhero on stage and is like, "You guys are hangin' out tonight, right? I got more fucking coke than Motley Crüe!" And I see Aleks go, "Oh my god!"

Aleks: My aunt was sitting right there. My aunt lives in L.A. and some of my family came to see me.

Joe: If my mom is reading this, I didn't do any of it.

Aleks: I hadn't seen my aunt for like two and half years, and thank god she didn't understand what he said. My cousin just kind of looked at me like, "Yeahhh."

Joe: That's why we wear the leather jackets and tight pants.

Ben: What are your favorite Columbus bands?

Joe: Times New Viking.

Sean: Beach Dudes.

Jon: Beach Dudes are probably the best band.

Joe: White On White Violence. Flight Of The Thunderbolts, which will be my one-man band because it is my fantasy to be in a band called Flight Of The Thunderbolts.

Jon: Vegetative State. TV Eye. But Beach Dudes are number one. Best band in Ohio. Possibly the Midwest.

Aleks: More than likely in the United States, North America, and if we have to go further: earth.

Sean: The universe.

Aleks: The Milky Way.

Joe: In real life, Times New Viking and The Squares. I like Carson Drew too.

Aleks: And what's that other band? The Alchobollocks.

Joe: What's a band that we *don't* like?

Aleks: I don't know, pick one.

Joe: The worst band in the fucking world is called The Shatters.

Dan: Downtroddn. They don't even have an E in their name. Come on. Two D's and an N.

Joe: No, The Shatters are the worst band ever. Any band with that drummer.

Aleks: I like the drummer. I used to work with him. He's a nice guy.

Joe: He's a douchebag. [Everyone laughs.] You're not supposed to be happy when you play rock'n'roll, I'm sorry. Unless you're Marc Bolan or David Bowie.

Aleks: He doesn't play rock'n'roll! Where is the rock'n'roll in The Shatters? They're a fucking musician band. All they do is musicate.

Ben: How did you guys hook up with Deadbeat Records?

Joe: [Tom from Deadbeat] just begged us to do it. [Everyone laughs.] Am I kidding?

Aleks: He did keep asking us for demos over the internet after the first 7" came out.

Joe: That was only after we decided we didn't want to go with Warner Brothers or Matador.

Ben: You know, he used to live here in Kent. He used to go to the Mantis to see Sockeye and Kill The Hippies, and all that.

Aleks: Yeah, he told us that. Uh, well, he basically told us his life story when we met him, and it takes him a long time to finish a sentence, so imagine what the life story was like.

Joe: But yeah, he heard our 7" and kept asking us for demos.

Aleks: And it took us forever to send him something. Then he said he was interested in putting out our record, and we were like, "That'd be awesome."

Joe: We actually patched up a hole in that sinking boat of a record label, to tell you the truth. [Everyone laughs a lot.]

Ben: So did you record that whole album in someone's bedroom?

Dan: In Sean's bedroom.

Aleks: Well, the drums were done in the living room at our old place.

Sean: A little mobile 8-track recorder.

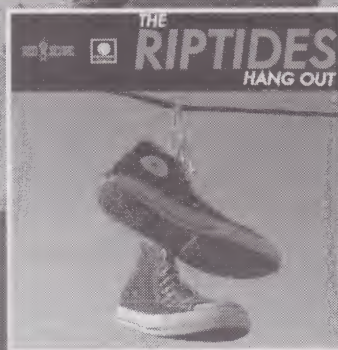
Joe: We did twenty-two songs in an hour. That's how much effort we put into our work.



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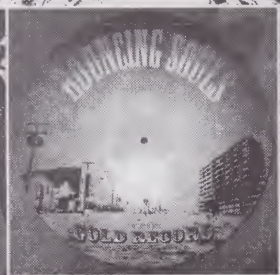


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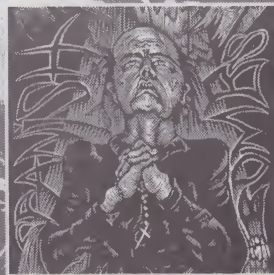
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Jon: We're thorough. We're good. In an hour, that's like three takes per song.

Aleks: Well, the drums were done in one take because he did them non-stop.

Joe: No, because I am awesome.

Jon: I try to forget everything about the recording process.

Aleks: Because it is always fun to try to remember it next time we record. "Where does this part go?"

Ben: So what do you think you can get from an 8-track recording that you don't get in a big budget studio?

Sean: You get the job done.

Aleks: The warmth of the recording, I think, because the sterile recording is no fun. It does not excite the ear. At least not mine.

Joe: It's sort of like lying, because we're not that good.

Aleks: We can hide our imperfections behind static.

Sean: Aleks doesn't like stereo. He can only hear one thing at a time. He's got a one-track mind.

Aleks: Over you!

Ben: Did you read the album review in *Razormag*?

Aleks: It is the funniest shit I ever read about us ever in print. "This albums sounds like they must've smoked a shit-ton of pot

Aleks: They got us drunk and threw a party for us.

Jon: Fargo is one of the best places to play.

Aleks: The coolest thing about it is that it is right across the street from Minnesota.

Jon: We were actually playing in Moorehead, Minnesota, but it's generally the same thing. I like going back there. I think we should play there more often. It's an awesome city.

Joe: Plus it is the only place where any of us ever put a hole in the stage. Dan totally rocked a hole in the stage.

Ben: With a mic stand?

Dan: No, with just my foot. I found a weak spot and my foot went through up to my ankle.

Aleks: And if I remember correctly, The Sun played that bar a few weeks later and one of them fell into that same hole.

Jon: Every band should play Fargo. Some of the greatest people are there.

Aleks: Driving to there and from there is one thing, but when you get there, it is totally worth everything.

Ben: I read a few other interviews with you guys, and you've mentioned Stabbing Westward as an influence more than once. How big of an influence are they?

Sean: Actually the Wesley Willis song

Ben: Nice. Aleks, I hear that you throw yourself a big birthday party every year.

Aleks: Because nobody else will.

Ben: Didn't you make buttons for it with your face on them?

Joe: I've got a whole box of them.

Aleks: If you are gonna throw a party, you might as well invite a good band, and for the last four years that I've done it, it was always Kill The Hippies. They are one of my favorite bands. It always worked out; they are the only ones who would answer the call.

Joe: They don't have any friends either, so it is a mutual thing.

Ben: So Jon and Aleks, tell me about your side project: Eric Wrong & The Do Rights.

Aleks: Basically, what happened was a friend of ours' band pretty much quit, and he asked me and Jon to play guitar, and we said yeah because we thought we were starting a new band with Eric. It was something to do because we didn't have much to do. We were doing the Feelers but we wanted to do something else too. But he also got some older dudes from the scene who used to party with Johnny Thunders.

Jon: There were a lot of cool people, but this band is what we really want to do.

Aleks: Yeah, they were cool, but they

"THE ROCK HIT THE FUCKING PLANET I WAS BIRTHED ON.
I THINK I HAVE A NATURAL BORN RIGHT
TO SEE THE FUCKING HOLE."

while recording it," or something like that. We couldn't even score coke. We were drunk for most of it, but that's just part of the creative process.

Dan: Nobody in this band smokes pot.

Aleks: Not that we never have, but we just don't currently.

Sean: Rest assured, we are recording our next album on weed.

Ben: Jon, what was it like to play in Fargo in front of your mom and high school friends?

Jon: My mom wasn't even there.

Ben: I thought she was.

Jon: That was someone's reporting error, but it was cool to play home.

Sean: That was like the best show ever, though.

"Stabbing Westward" was a big influence.

Jon: Really, it's not about the band and the music...

Aleks: It's about the dudes, man.

Jon: And the lifestyle. Seriously, when you think of Stabbing Westward you think of that one hit on MTV2 which is pushed aside nowadays, but no, Stabbing Westward is about a lifestyle. It's about bros for bros fighting for the truth, you know.

Sean: I prefer Stabbing Leftward.

Aleks: Which is also west if you are standing facing the right direction.

Jon: It's all a directional thing. But, yeah, they were a huge influence musically and spiritually.

Aleks: "What do I have to do to make you want me?" That is an actual quote.

were like, "We already have the name and we already have the songs." So we ended up in that band, and it was fun and we had fun doing it. We played a Sobriety Fest where we got drunk behind the stage. Jon, me, and Eric got drunk behind the stage and walked onto the stage completely shit-faced to play for a bunch of recovering alcoholics because the drummer was the counselor at the rehab. He got us this gig at the Lancaster, Ohio, fairgrounds in a stadium setting. It was hilarious. We were off our feet fucking drunk in a hundred degrees heat. It was fucked up.

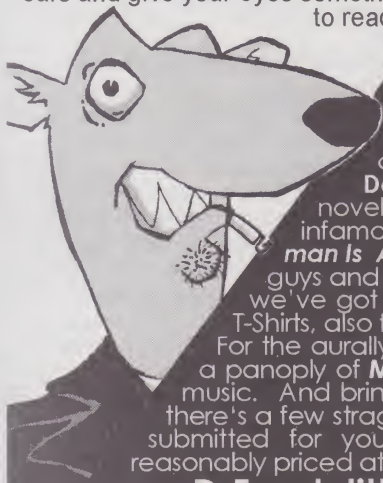
Ben: Joe, why are you referred to as Q.T. Thunderguns?

Sean: Queer Teeth Thunderguns: that's his name.

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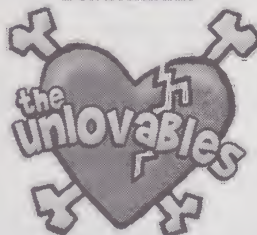
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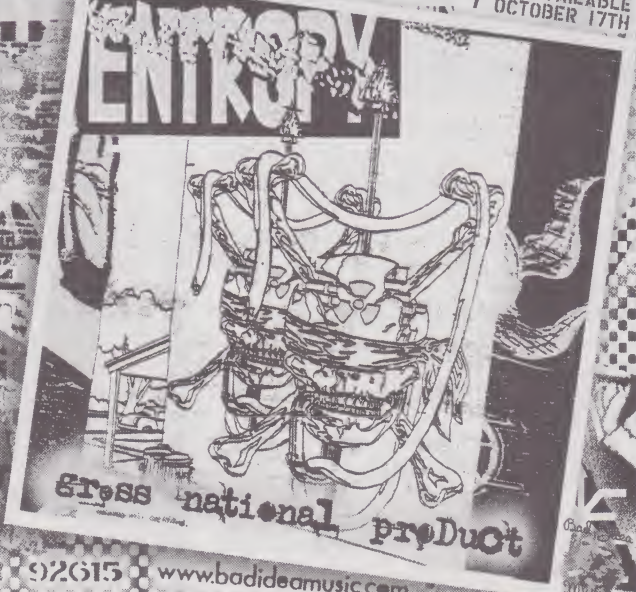
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Dan: That's because he was chewing on a pen and it was pink and it exploded in his mouth.

Joe: Plus, I have huge fucking arms. [Everyone laughs.]

Jon: We're not leaving any mystery. It's all coming out. This is us totally unraveled.

Ben: So, Joe and Dan are brothers?

Joe: Yeah.

Ben: I heard that you joined after Dan drove to Michigan to get you where you were working as a camp counselor.

Joe: No, I wasn't working as a camp counselor.

Dan: Yes you were.

Joe: I was a bartender!

Dan: But it is so much better if you were a camp counselor. You could be like Chris Carrabba (Dashboard Confessional) singing campfire songs to thirteen-year-olds then boning them once they cried.

Aleks: Basically, we kicked out our old drummer then called Joe in Michigan right in front of him and asked if he wanted to be our new drummer.

Dan: Our old drummer was a fragile little child.

Ben: What was wrong with him?

Jon: A lot of things.

Aleks: He had some issues.

Joe: He's a douchebag, an asshole.

Dan: He would cancel practice all the time. This was my favorite one. Chris, are you coming to practice? "Oh, I don't know, I really gotta clean my apartment." Fuck off!

Aleks: The day this happened we were actually practicing. He says he's going outside for a second. Twenty minutes pass. Half hour. Forty minutes. An hour. I go upstairs and I say "Hey Chris, what's going on?" and he says "I don't think I want to do this anymore." So I said, "Fuck it, you're out. Why don't we call Joe in Michigan and see if he'll come back and play for us."

Dan: I was passively pushing for it too, because one day we were practicing and Chris had to go off and do... I don't know what... learn to how to read or something. He was studying to be a nurse and he had to go study for an exam or something, so Joe came downstairs and we played for a long time and it rocked harder.

Joe: I bring a lot to this band, and they saw that really early on. They were sort of pining for me, first of all, as a drummer, second of all, as the only male model available.

Aleks: He was kind of deciding between us and Rush, because they were going to kick Neil Peart out. He decided to go with the little guy.

Joe: I'm a lost cause crusader. [laughter.]

Dan: You're a dipshit.

Aleks: Which is another word for lost cause crusader.

Ben: So what do you guys do during these long road trips between gigs to amuse yourselves?

Jon: We listen to a lot of Vengaboys and there are a lot of "blank-space" J's

going on. The blank can be filled in by multiple letters.

Joe: I'll take a BC for my J. Butt Crack Job.

Jon: Either CJ's or KJ's for me.

Joe: We gotta outlaw foot jobs.

Aleks: Talking to each other is not an option.

Jon: Yeah, as long as we don't make eye contact, everything is cool. We can still respect each other by the time we reach our destination.

Aleks: There are a lot of comedy CDs involved.

Joe: By comedy CDs you mean putting a jerk-off blanket on the back bench for the four of us sittin' there.

Jon: "C.D." meaning cum disposal. Yes, it gets very nasty.

Sean: We do ride into the storm listening to Judas Priest.

Dan: W.A.S.P. has taken us into battle many a time.

Joe: I fuck like a beast.

Ben: I read something about one of you wearing a ski mask, scaring motorists. [All hands point to Jon.]

Aleks: Driving down the street in a car, he does that. If you put a guy behind the steering wheel with a fucking ski mask on in a van that has "Van-O-War" written on it... I swear to god, we must have caused fifty accidents somewhere down the line.

Sean: That was worse than the time we saw George Lucas on a motorcycle.

Jon: Seriously, he patrols Indiana. George Lucas, on like a BMW motorcycle.

Ben: So who is the "fucker from AAA" who totaled your car?

Jon: We were on our way back from Fargo and we got a phone call from Sean's girlfriend, his girlfriend and my girlfriend were driving Sean's car, and some AAA guy just ran a red light and smashed the car to shit.

Aleks: [Looking at me] He knows too much about us, we'll have to kill him.

Dan: How many death threats do you get?

Ben: This is the first one, actually.

Aleks: Just watch your back.

Ben: So Sean, do you like playing in the Feelers better than The Reatards?

Joe: No he doesn't!

Sean: I like playing guitar more than I like playing bass, but I like playing with the Feelers more than the Reatards.

Ben: How come?

Joe: [Band makes beeping noises] Open the door, we'll back up.

Sean: I don't know; I just do.

Aleks: What is this, the *National Enquirer*?

Ben: There's dirt, and I'm diggin' it up. Okay, final question. You've got twenty seconds to live, what is your last action?

Sean: Take as many people down with me as possible.

Joe: How are we dying, by the way?

Ben: I don't know. How about a fiery inferno?

Aleks: I am a Jew, so that doesn't concern me. That's for Catholics or Christians. Sorry, you got my answer.

Joe: Aleks's people were chosen for self-denial.

Aleks: Do I sense a bit of jealousy and envy?

Dan: I always forget that. Yeah, I'd probably try to convert to Judaism.

Jon: Yeah, last minute conversions all around. And a bunch of blank jobs.

Joe: Hurry up and get rid of that foreskin! I would cut off what's left of my foreskin. By cut off, I mean chew off.

Aleks: I would watch every episode of *Jack of All Trades* from when it first came out.

Joe: In twenty seconds? That's a rich twenty seconds.

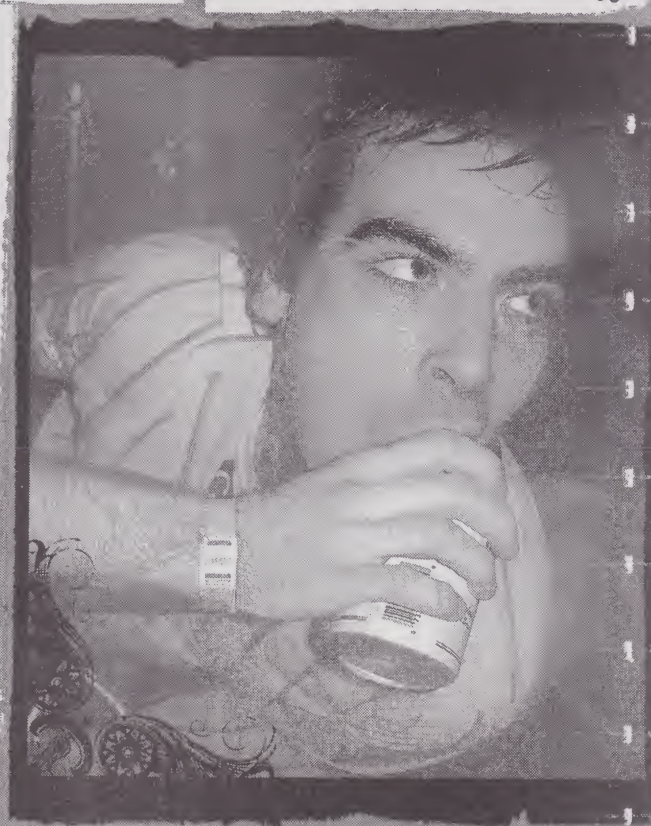
Jon: I could have sex like three times in that. It's awesome.

Dan: I can disappoint fifteen girls.

Jon: Just another day.

Aleks: I would write a twenty-second oeuvre on the ukulele.

[Post-Interview Note: Much later that night, Aleks went on to sing and play a touching rendition of Europe's "The Final Countdown" on the piano, then led everyone in a sing-along to Poison's "Every Rose Has Its Thorn." It was beautiful.]



the beautiful tragedy of...

Whiskey & Co.

Interview with Kim Helm by Parker H. Hasting
Photos by Aaron Kahn

Small towns in the South emphasize sadness. Now, don't misunderstand me. I don't think that there exists a higher percentage of unhappy people in these towns, as I am almost positive that even the largest and most bustling American metropolis contains a comparable—if not greater—ratio of dolefulness, but the small, sun-bleached cities of our nation's underbelly cannot mask the truth compared to the glamorous distraction and enchanting ambiance of the urban behemoths by which they are dwarfed. When you live in one of these towns, however, the truth of lower-class American life is slapped on a plate and served without garnish or ornamentation.

You may be able to get some grits, though.

The first time I ever realized the staggering beauty of Southern sadness was the weekend of The Fest 3, in the swampy, stagnant heat of Gainesville,

to dull the hurt of knowing they'll probably be stuck forever.

I've seen Whiskey & Co. play many times since that day, and each time they are more finely tuned and mastered, but nothing will ever top the feeling of awe I felt upon realizing that they had created a stunning portrait of the human condition in the dry, still town of Gainesville.

Parker: Didn't you graduate recently?

Kim: I did, I graduated at the end of April.

Parker: With a degree in...

Kim: I got my Master's in social work.

Parker: So what's next?

Kim: I'm applying for jobs. My internship was at the VA hospital, at a post traumatic stress disorder clinic... I applied for a job there actually, so I'm kinda waiting to hear about that.

Parker: How long have you lived in Gainesville?

Kim: It'll be twelve years in August.

weird when you go out on tour with bands that aren't like you at all, but at the same time, it makes it more interesting. You'd think people that come to see the other band wouldn't necessarily stick around to see some other band that's more traditionally country, but sometimes they do.

Parker: And do you get a positive reaction usually?

Kim: Usually. When we went on tour with Against Me!, everyone was really positive about it. We went on tour with Hot Water Music one time and we always played first. I think a lot of people didn't really know what to do with us, but nobody was ever throwing tomatoes or anything.

Parker: What do you find appealing about playing country music as opposed to less traditional genres?

Kim: I enjoy country music, more traditional country music, because when I started to learn how to play guitar myself, it was easier to play three chords slowed down than it was to play them fast. I'm not very good at bar chords... But that's how we

“It makes sense that you're going to want to go back to your roots sometimes when you feel like you've gotten far away from them.”

Florida. On the outdoor deck of Common Grounds, the members of Whiskey & Co. were alternating between setting up their equipment and swilling bottles of Pabst to escape the breezeless swelter. I was sweat-soaked and weary from the previous days of barhopping from block to block, trying desperately to see it all, and was quite ready to throw in the towel, but the first verse Whiskey & Co. played left me stunned and staring. They were unlike any band The Fest had presented me thus far. Whiskey & Co. embody the beautiful tragedy of the south. Kim Helm's voice is sweet enough to make you blush, but also drips with the regret of a Southern belle left alone too long. The rest of the band sound like seasoned veterans of a country circuit long forgotten anywhere but the dark bars of Nashville.

As I listened to them that day, it slowly became clear why I found the music of Whiskey & Co. so moving. The songs they wrote perfectly capture the despondent imagery all too common in Gainesville. Sure, some of the bars are packed with doe-eyed college kids, hoping to get drunk enough to brag about it later, but the outskirts of town are littered with bars and lounges untouched by such frivolity. These are people stuck in a rut; and whether it's substance abuse, heartache, or simply the pains of aging, they are trying

Parker: Do you feel like the music scene in Gainesville has changed any since you've moved here?

Kim: I think that there's always been a kind of flux, up and down, with the music scene in Gainesville as far as more people being into it—more people moving to town. Because it's a college town, people are always moving in. That reinvigorates all of us older folks that lose momentum sometimes.

Parker: Do you think that No Idea's presence and growth since the '80s has anything to do with some of the changes?

Kim: Certainly some of them. The music scene is a lot bigger than No Idea and what they focus on, so it's hard to say that they're responsible for all of it. But they definitely give opportunity for bands in Gainesville to have an outlet, someone that will put out your records and distribute them for you... so that's always nice.

Parker: When was Whiskey & Co. originally formed?

Kim: [thinking, eyes to the sky] Umm... '98 or '99. I can't say for sure because they formed the band without me originally. I think it was around '99.

Parker: How has it been being the only country outfit on a traditionally punk label?

Kim: I was actually surprised. We didn't expect anyone to have interest in us recording. Somebody told us that Var (founder of No Idea) really liked the demo we had made, which was flattering, and then he told us he would put it out. It's always

always envisioned ourselves. We were all in punk rock bands before, but we kind of slowed ourselves down. You can sing about the same things in country music as you can in punk rock, or you can just tell stories. I feel like I have more room lyrically in the country format. When I was writing punk rock lyrics, I felt like I had to have certain ideas going into it all the time.

Parker: What kind of ideas?

Kim: Well, back when I was younger you had to be more political and you had to be more up-front about what was going on in the world rather than saying those things in more of a story. I guess that's what I've found myself doing lately. Still commenting on who you are as a person and how you feel about the world, but not in such a direct and in-your-face sort of way.

Parker: What are some musical influences, new or old, of yours right now?

Kim: I've always loved Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash—Loretta Lynn because she was a woman and wrote most of her own songs, even back when she first started, while having eight kids on her hip at the same time. She played guitar and wrote her own songs and made her own records. I always found that kind of empowering. More recently... there's just so much music out there... the new Dixie Chicks album, I thought that was pretty good. Most people probably wouldn't, I guess...

Parker: How do you feel about the state of current popular country in general? The CMT hit-list type stuff.

Kim: I like to laugh at a lot of the current country music. I listen to it in my car and it never ceases to surprise me what will come out next, as far as "Honky-Tonk Badonkadonk" and "Size Matters." (Kim is referring to two songs, by Trace Adkins and Joe Nichols respectively, that are highly ranked on the country charts despite having nothing more than a southern accent in common with traditional country music. "Honky Tonk Badonkadonk" is about large asses, and "Size Matters" is a song about a woman who wants a man with large attributes. Although the latter never directly mentions genitalia, the underlying theme is driven home at the end of each verse by the phrase "size matters.") You just think, "What are they talking about?" It just seems like they could challenge themselves more, because they do have a big forum, but I guess they have an audience that they are trying to please at the same time. I guess it's easy for me to say that in independent-land.

met them. That's always a little shocking. But I'm not that surprised because they write good music and they have a great thing going between the band members personally. Musically, it seems like every album they've written expands on the last one and you get to see how they've grown and changed a little bit.

Parker: If you could pick virtually anyone to play with, let's say four bands for a Dream Tour, who would it be?

Kim: That's a tough one... I'd probably say Loretta Lynn, although I don't know if she's touring anymore. The Replacements, The Pogues... does that count?

Parker: For a hypothetical situation... yeah, that counts.

Kim: I'd really have to think about that one for a while to pick a fourth.

Parker: In the past few years there's been a huge swell in the genre a lot of critics refer to as "alt-country" and even a swell in younger traditional artists, what do you

somebody else. When my mom asked if I smoked crack or not I was like "I didn't write that song!" When other people ask, it's not necessarily like that.

Parker: So whose experiences are the crack-related lyrics referring to?

Kim: I'd say it's probably an amalgamation of different people in the band, different friends that we know who've had troubles with life and love and loss—people who are just down and out, who want to get wasted, smoke crack, whatever. I won't name anyone.

Parker: With a name like Whiskey & Co. and lyrics that support its validity, it's assumed that all the members are seasoned drinkers. Is that more or less true for any particular member?

Kim: I'd say we're all pretty seasoned. Our drinks of choice may differ, but nobody is any more or less of a drinker.

Parker: So what's your drink of choice?

Kim: Depends on the day. Today, I was fishing, so a cold beer sounds awesome.

"I don't think you can stop making music once you've started; that would be like stopping eating."

Parker: On *Leaving the Nightlife*, a John Prine song was covered. What was the reasoning behind that choice?

Kim: I've always been a really big John Prine fan. He's a really great songwriter. I brought a couple of his songs to the band, to be covers. We did a duet of his.

Parker: Which one?

Kim: [again eyes up, combing her memory] Umm... "In Spite of Ourselves." That was really fun. It's a funny song. It prompted Brian to look into John Prine more and listen to more of his stuff and Brian was like "Hey! I really like this song 'Clocks and Spoons,' why don't we cover this?" It really fit with what we were doing at the time and fit with our style, lyrically.

Parker: You know he still tours and dances around and he's like sixty something.

Kim: Yeah he does! He plays all sorts of festivals.

Parker: Who are your favorite bands to play with in Gainesville?

Kim: We just played with The Rockhill Sessions Band sessions and it was really fun. I love playing with Ninja Gun. They're not really from Gainesville, but it feels like they are. I love playing with The Ones To Blame, we have a lot of friends in that band and I like what they're doing a lot. It's always fun to play with Against Me!, but they aren't in town much these days.

Parker: You knew Against Me! before they exploded into their current status, are you shocked about how big they've gotten?

Kim: Sometimes it's a little surprising to think that my fourteen-year-old niece knows all of their names and thinks they're all awesome, even though she's never

attribute that to?

Kim: It makes sense that you're going to want to go back to your roots sometimes when you feel like you've gotten far away from them. It's not surprising, considering how mainstream country has become, that people want to go back to a more traditional style.

Parker: Do you think that your music is commercially viable to traditional country fans?

Kim: I think so, or at least I hope so. I think it's a lot more traditional country than it is "alt-country." That's at least what we've been told and that's the feeling I get when I listen to it. I guess more on the new record there may be some differences. I would hope that people can identify with it in a more traditional way. I think that's where we're coming from. We were all kind of fans of Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash and outlaw country and traditional country. Those were the styles we were emulating and figuring out how to recreate for ourselves.

Parker: You've said before that people occasionally think that the lyrics from the first album were written by you. Are there any particular lyrics you've been asked about?

Kim: I've been asked if I smoke crack. People have told me that they thought I was a lesbian. People have asked me if I had a horrible mother, because of the song "Screen Door" on the first record.

Parker: And how do you respond to that? Do you immediately say "I didn't write that."?

Kim: No, I don't always say that. I usually approach it in the sense that I know the people who those songs are written about, or I know what the song is written about personally even though it's not my own story. Sometimes I say it was written by

Usually, it's Maker's on the rocks.

Parker: How was recording at Goldentone for the second time?

Kim: It was good. We actually gave ourselves a lot more time the second time to spend time on different parts. We had eight days, so we had a lot more time for guitar solos and vocals. Personally, it was better the second time around because I knew what to expect. I had never recorded like that before the first record. It was easier and more comfortable. I was alone when I was doing vocals so I wasn't so nervous.

Parker: What was the writing process like for the new album?

Kim: On the first album, the songs were written before I was in the band, so with the new record it was more of a collaboration. Usually, what happens is one of us will bring a song, kind of a skeleton song, just lyrics and a melody and we'll go from there. Scott (Norman) and Ronnie (Holmes) will play lead over certain parts.

Parker: Who brings in the songs?

Kim: Brian (Johnson), Darren (Kucera), Scott and I wrote all the songs on the second record.

Parker: Do you think the second record was a logical progression from the first?

Kim: I think so. I think it's a progression for us as individuals, at least for myself. I was more comfortable and was able to write about things in a more honest sense. I became more comfortable with the song writing process in general and learned to play guitar better. Lyrically, I think it was a progression.

Parker: Your voice sounds a lot stronger on the second record. Do you think that can be attributed to your larger role in the songwriting process?

Kim: That's probably part of it. I think mainly I've just become more confident. After recording the first album and hearing that people liked it and would come to our shows, I knew there was a good response, so all of that built my self-confidence up. I've always been really shy, and a little negative, when it came to singing anything, so hearing it and liking the way I sounded gave me a boost, especially when we started writing more songs and I felt more like they were my songs. I could sing them without doubt.

Parker: If you were previously so shy, where did you get the confidence to approach the former incarnation of the band about singing?

Kim: I don't know. I was friends with Darren, and I knew most of them and I saw them play so I told Darren that I wanted to sing for his band and he said, "Come to practice!" At first I wouldn't even face them when I was singing and I wouldn't sing in the microphone.

Parker: Do you feel more sentimental about the new album?

Kim: I do! I feel more connected to it. I really like the old album and I think it turned out great, but I think that because it was more of a collaboration, I felt more comfortable with the bands member, more involved. There was a time when I didn't think we'd get a chance to record it and that made me really sad. I really pushed for recording it before Ian (Hernandez, original drummer) left last summer.

Parker: How has the transition from Ian to John been?

Kim: It hasn't necessarily been easy, because we all love Ian so much. Ian has his own style of drumming which is really

hard to emulate, not that you want anyone to play exactly the same thing, but it was a little hard for all of us to adjust to having a new drummer to get used to. It sounds a little bit more rock 'n' roll to me, which is fine. I think now that we've started working on new songs we've all become more comfortable again because John is more part of the process. The same way I felt more a part of the process with the second album. It took a little while for us to get comfortable, but now it's fine.

Parker: Are there any rituals that you guys have as a band before a show?

Kim: Everyone has their own rituals. I always drink a shot of whiskey before I go onstage. That's my own personal ritual and I usually try to get the band to do the same thing. Usually they will. It's more for my nerves than anything else. I've found that I'm not really comfortable unless I do that.

Parker: How would you describe the average Whiskey & Co. fan that comes to shows?

Kim: That's interesting, because in a recent interview I did one of the questions was whether or not a lot of "hillbillies" came to our shows, and I found the question slightly offensive.

Parker: I hope I'm using a little more tact than that.

Kim: Don't worry, you are. It's usually pretty varied. A lot of our friends come to the shows, punk rock kids come, college kids come, maybe working folk from Gainesville. We get emails asking when we're going to play next and I'm always surprised with the age range. I don't know if there really is an average Whiskey & Co. fan.

Parker: You guys are developing a stronger fan base outside the southeast. Do you think a larger-scale tour might be in the future for Whiskey & Co.?

Kim: I would hope so. I would love to go on a larger tour. I know all of us would. We just have a lot of time constraints, as far as work or school or spouses or whoever keeps us from doing anything too extensive. I know we're going to try and do more weekend shows around the southeast this summer, we always get asked if we're going to play in California. For some reason there are a lot of people that want us to play there. That would be nice. Now that I'm done with school and don't really have a job, I won't rule anything out.

Parker: Do you have any other future expectations for Whiskey & Co.?

Kim: I would love to write more songs and put out another record with John now that he's here and playing with us full time. I think that Scott is going to move to N.C. so that's going to be another transition for us, which is a little sad and difficult for me to think about. He's become a big part of the band and the way that we sound so it'll be hard to watch him go. Hopefully we can continue after he leaves. That's kind of up in the air. I know we all want to, but it might just change who we are a little bit.

Parker: If the band didn't continue after Scott left, do you think you would continue making music?

Kim: Absolutely, I don't think you can stop making music once you've started; that would be like stopping eating.



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Amy Adoyzie

Top Five Crazy Chinky Stuff in Chinaland

- PB effin' R, a six-pack for the equivalent of \$3 USD
- Most busted Ramones T-shirt knock off, with these names in the circle "Johanny," "Tommy," and "WvV Orrobb"
- Jiffy Peanut Butter, not as good as the all-natural Trader Joe's PB and it might have MSG, but it's still peanut butter.
- A dozen tattoo stalls in a huge shopping complex/swap meet with nary a sanitizer in sight.
- Si wa wa, like a burrito with slivers of radishes, peanuts, tofu and more for just 50 cents!

Aphid Peewit

- Henry Fiat's Open Sore, *Don't Try This at Home* (video)
- Fucked Up, *Hidden World* CD
- Career Suicide, *2004 to 2005: Anthology Vol. 2* CD
- Charles Bukowski *Tapes* DVD
- Brother Theodore *Speaks* DVD

Ben Snakepit

1. Sass Dragons, *Mancandy* CD
2. Drunken Boat CD
3. Dan Padilla CD
4. Fleshies, *Scrape the Walls* LP
5. All the bands that played Plan-It-X Fest, but none of the kids in Bloomington, you stuck-up motherfuckers! Way to make everyone feel unwelcome!

Bradley Williams

- Geordie, *Don't Be Fooled by the Name* LP
- Listening to old 78's at the lodge.
- Riding my bike through L.A. traffic.
- Moyland's IPA (beer!)
- Face's (anything by them is fine by me.)

Brian Mosher

- The Shakes, *The Rise and Fall of Modern Living* CD
- Muck And The Mires, *1-2-3-4* CD
- DC Snipers, *Missile Sunset* CD
- *The Fairytales of Hermann Hesse* (Book)
- *13 Moons*, (DVD, starring Steve Buscemi)

Buttertooth

1. Hot New Mexicans, *It's Called Leaning Back* CD
2. Old Tyme Relijun, *2012* CD
3. Slint, *Tweez* CD
4. Erase Errata, *Other Animals* CD
5. The Sea And Cake, *Oui* CD

Chris Devlin

The Five Albums That Were in the Front of My Frequent Play Stack on 10/7/06

1. The Marked Men, *Fix My Brain*
2. Swing Ding Amigos, *Mongolita Chronicles*
3. The Riverboat Gamblers, *Something to Crow About*
4. Superchunk, *Here's Where the Strings Come In*
5. This Is My Fist!, *A History of Rats*

Chris Peigler

1. K Is For The Kids, Self-titled cassette (I Object side project)
2. Young People With Faces, Self-titled LP
3. I Object/F.P.O. Split 7"
4. Koro, Self-titled EP 7" reissue
5. *No Bullshit Vol. 1* 7" comp

Chris Pepus

Five Plays That Were Punk Before Punk

- John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*
- Peter Barnes, *The Ruling Class*
- Bertolt Brecht, *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui*
- Eugène Ionesco, *Rhinoceros*
- Joe Orton, *Loot*

Chris Prorock

1. Radio Birdman live for the first time ever in New York, 9/8/06
2. My current possession of every *Prisoner* episode ever filmed.
3. Incredible Kidda Band

- (Perhaps the most underrated U.K. power pop band ever?)
4. The still unreleased and awe-inspiring MC5 documentary, *A True Testimonial*
 5. The vitriolic enthusiasm of Ryan Leach

Comrade Bree

1. ESG, *A South Bronx Story*
2. Hunchback, *Ugly on the Inside* CD
3. Yes, Oh Yes (live shows, any of them)
4. Dashed Schueler, *Being Original Is Great, But So Is Being Honest* CD
5. Elena Steuber Scholarship/Memorial Fund (Rock and Roll Camp for Girls, Portland, OR)

Dan Monick

1. BARR's new 7"
2. New cupcake bakery on Magnolia.
3. Wolf Like Me, "TV on the Radio"
4. La Grange, "ZZTop"
5. My new sheets for my bed.

Daryl Gussin

- Fucked Up, *Hidden World*
- Panacea String Band, Jackson, Moloch Plays The Grove, and Harvest Moon Society playing in an empty cave at the abandoned Griffith Park Zoo.
- Stressface, *Oh...You're Welcome*
- Held Hostage, *Discography*
- Fucked Up, *Hidden World*

Designated Dale

- Riverboat Gamblers at the Key Club in L.A.
- Swing Ding Amigos, *Kings of Culo* LP.
- *Gene Simmons Family Jewels* TV show. From the young, cocksure demon to someone who resembles a Yiddish-looking, age-old Johnny Cash, this show rules.
- Watching that drunk brown bear on TV do his best Topsy McStagger during a spot on the news recently. Only you can prevent forest hangovers.
- The upcoming tribute to Big Drill Car coming out on Itchy Korean Records.

Donofthedead

- Curioso, *Momentos Felizes* CDEP
- Dismorphic and Population Reduction, live

Gabe Rock

- Rolling up in a stretch limo to the Long Beach Warehouse for my b-day to see Hellshock!
- Minutemen, *We Jam Econo* DVD
- ABBA, *Gold* CD

- Dan Padilla, Hot New Mexicans, One Reason, Dukes Of Hillsborough, Blotto: Tour
- Off With Their Heads, *Hospitals*
- Carrie Nations, *Be Still*
- This Is My Fist!, *I Don't Want to Startle You But They Are Going to Kill Most of Us 7"*
- Allergic To Bullshit, *What We're for Is What We'll Get 7"*

Greg Barbera

1. Library book sales (\$5 for a brown grocery bag full!)
2. Skateboarding ditches
3. Standing in to sing S.O.A.'s "Lost In Space" for the Cross Laws
4. Mastodon, *Blood Mountain* CD/DVD
5. Dead Moon, *Echoes of the Past 2 x CD*

Jason Donnerparty

1. Dead Moon at El Corazon
2. The Buff Medways, *This Is This*
3. Rocket From The Crypt, *Rockets Redux*
4. The James Brown *Hotpants* LP that I found in Salem, Oregon for \$5
5. Cab Calloway

Jennifer Whiteford

Songs for Breaking Up

1. "Feeling All Emo (Since I Broke Up With You)," The Unlovables
2. "Sink, Florida, Sink," Against Me!
3. "Antisocial," The Briefs
4. "Saturday Nite Crap-o-rama," The Ergs!
5. "Going Crazy," Marked Men

Jenny Moncayo

1. Awesome Snakes, "Awesome Snacks"
2. Against Me, "Don't Lose Touch" (Live album)
3. Dead To Me and Riverboat Gamblers at Alex's Bar, 10/6/06.
4. *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* by Oscar Zeta Acosta (book)
5. Westbound Train, "Please Forgive Me"

From Assück to ABBA and beyond...

Jessica Thiringer

1. Al Foul, "Dropping Quarters for Jane"
2. The Lost Sounds, "Lost & Found"
3. Bram Riddlebarger & His Lonesome Band, "Rhythm & Soul"
4. Alley Dukes, "American Nightmare"
5. Country Teasers, "I'm a New Person, Ma'am"

Jimmy Alvarado

My Faboo Five
 • Eat'n' vegetarian pastrami sammiches with Karla, Jake 'n' Jacquie.
 • Jay Reatard, "Hammer I Miss You" 45
 • *Tales from the Australian Underground*, comp CD
 • *Billy Jack* on DVD
 • Watching the GOP crash and burn like the fucking self-righteous hypocrites they are. Bless you, Mark Foley for demonstrating your pederasty and lack of self-control in such a public way.

Joe Evans

Top Five Bands I Probably Had No Right to See This Year
 • Lifetime (with The Unlovables, in New Brunswick)
 • Bugout Society (with GO! at ABC No)
 • Dirt Bike Annie (randomly at a party)
 • The Dicks (in Brooklyn with The Marked Men and Megan Pants)
 • Dick Army (at George Tabb benefits)

Julia Smut

1. Entropy, *Gross National Product* debut 7" on Bad Idea Music
2. Helen Shapiro, The Abbey Road Recordings
3. People who don't drive like total cocksuckers.
4. People who aren't stupid douchebags.
5. People who don't mix politics into music.

Keith Rosson

- Madison Bloodbath, *Is That a Knife in My Back...* Demo CD
- Riverboat Gamblers, *Something to Crow About* LP
- Randy, *The Human Atom Bombs* CD
- George Singleton, *Drowning in Gruel* (Short story collection)
- Mark Binetti, *Sacco and Vanzetti Must Die!* (Novel)

Kiyoshi

Five Movies I Have Never Watched
 1. *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*
 2. *Rock n' Roll High School*
 3. *Pretty in Pink*
 4. *Porky's*
 5. *Suburbia*

Kurt Morris

1. Osker, *Idle Will Kill*
2. Patrol, *Destinations*
3. Zao, *The Fear Is What Keeps Us Here*
4. Pelican, everything
5. NPR Podcasts

Maddy Tight Pants

1. Kimya Dawson, *Hidden Vagenda* CD
2. *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* DVD
3. Homeschooled Christian fundamentalists
4. Anna Akhmatova (Russian poet)
5. The Hugo Chavez Book Club!

Megan Pants

Top Five Things that Are Not Titled
 • Dan Padilla, Self-titled
 • Sore Thumbs, Self-titled 7"
 • No Truth Lies, Self-titled CD
 • My brother finding and marrying a fantastic lady who makes him really happy.
 • Reading classic literature (Voltaire, Melville) either for pleasure or ammunition.

Mike Frame

1. New York Dolls, *Even This* CD
2. Lemonheads, Self-titled CD
3. Chris Knight, *Enough Rope* CD
4. Radio Birdman, *Zeno Beach* CD
5. Bad Reaction, *Symptoms* LP

Miss Namella

- Mooney Suzuki, live
- LACMA's "Breaking the Mode" fashion exhibit until January 2007.
- Fortune's Flesh, live with Vanessa.
- *Satan's Brew*, directed by Fassbinder
- The Feelers!!!

Mitch Clem

Last Five Albums I'd Listened to When Asked to Submit My Top Five for This Issue
 1. Naked Raygun, *Jettison*
 2. Assück, *Misery Index*
 3. Doc Hopper, *Aloha*
 4. Scared Of Chaka, Self-titled
 5. Severed Head Of State, *Anathema Device*

Mr. Z

Top Five Breakneck-Speed Albums of All Time
 1. Disrupt, *Unrest* CD
 2. Melt Banana, *Teeny Shiny* LP

3. Grimple, *Up Your Ass* LP
4. Charles Bronson, *Youth Attack 12"*
5. Agoraphobic Nosebleed, *Honkey Reduction* CD

Naked Rob

1. Die Princess Die, *Lions Eat Lions* CD
2. The Jonbenet, *Ugly/Heartless* CD
3. The Grannies, *Gumjob* CD
4. Fucked Up, *Hidden World* CD
5. Wolf Eyes, *Human Animal* CD

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

1. *Go Metric* Zine # 21
2. Subhumans (Canada), *New Dark Age Parade* CD
3. Various Artists, *Jamaica to Toronto, Soul Funk & Reggae 1967-1974* CD
4. The Jolts, *Jinx* CD
5. Les Breastfeeders, *Les Matins De Grand Soirs* CD

Rev. Nurb

1. Hidden Charms, *Square Root of Love* LP
2. Thor's Hammer, *From Keflavik with Love* CD
3. Sneaky Pinks, *I Can't Wait 7"* EP
4. Beavers, *The Beavers Are Back 7"* EP
5. The Tuesday Night Rock'n'Roll Dance Party, WUSB-FM, Stony Brook

Rhythm Chicken

5. Paul Westerberg, *Besterber: The Best of Paul Westerberg*
4. Happy Pills, *Lo-Fi*
3. Toys That Kill, *Citizen Abortion*
2. The Figgs, *Couldn't Get High*
1. BBC World Service radio programming...cause I'm gay.

Ryan Leach

1. Dillard And Clark, *The Fantastic Expedition of Dillard and Clark* LP
2. *Manufacturing Consent* by Noam Chomsky (book)
3. Rob Ritter (He's a bassist)
4. The Human League, *Dare!* LP
5. The Dentists, *You and Your Bloody Oranges* LP

Sean Koeppenick

Top Five John Candy DVDs I Am Looking Forward to Ripping Off the Shrink-Wrap and Viewing
 1. Planes, Trains and Automobiles
 2. Armed and Dangerous
 3. Summer Rental
 4. Who's Harry Crumb
 5. *It Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time*

Stevo

1. Samiam, *Whatever's Got You Down* CD
2. The Draft, *In a Million Pieces* CD
3. None More Black,

- This Is Satire* CD
 4. Blotto/Modern Machines Split 7"
 5. Monster Magnet, *Dopes to Infinity* 2 x LP

Susan Chung

Top Five 7"s I Can't Live Without (But Rather Than Pack Them Away, I Continue to Play Them Relentlessly)
 1. Scared of Chaka/Flake Music, Split
 2. The Manges, *Clean Cut Kids*
 3. Knugen Faller, *Inte Som Ni*
 4. Against Me!, *Sink Florida Sink/Unsubstantiated Rumors*
 5. The Rapture, *The Chair That Squeaks*

Tim Jamison

Top Five Old HC Bands Now on CD
 1. Code Of Honor, *Complete Studio Recordings 1982-1984*
 2. Articles Of Faith, *Complete Vol. 1&2*
 3. Negative Approach, *Total Recall*
 4. Scream, *Still Screaming, This Side Up*
 5. This Is Boston, Not L.A. w/ *Unsafe at Any Speed* EP

Todd Taylor

- Feelers, Self-titled 7"
- Dan Padilla, Self-titled CD
- Strike Anywhere, *Dead FMLP*
- Fucked Up, *Dangerous Fumes 7"*
- Giant Haystacks, *A Rebirth of Our City 7"*

Travis T.

- Minutemen, *We Jam Econo* DVD
- Nazis From Mars, *Fuck You! LP*
- Daniel Clowes, *Pussey!* (comic book)
- Johnny Ryan, *Comic Book Holocaust* (comic book)
- *Law & Order: SVU* marathon on USA (can't afford the DVDs)

Ty Stranglehold

1. Riverboat Gamblers, *To the Confusion of Our Enemies* CD (still!)
2. Sheglank'd Shoulders, *Endless Grind* CD
3. Frontside Five, *Fall Out of Line* CD
4. Smogtown, Self-titled 7"
5. Ripcordz, *100,000 Watts of Power* CD

Uri Garcia

1. Laserhead, *Ride Your Static* CD
2. Epiphone valve junior head through a 15" speaker
3. Pentagram, *Show 'Em How*
4. Saint Vitus, *Born Too Late*
5. JJ tubes

Hey! Person putting your reviewable in the mail: full album art is required for review. Pre-releases go into the trash.



Whatever it was that drew this foul-mouthed idiot savant out from his internet duck blind is anyone's guess.

—Aphid Peewit

AGAINST ME!: *Americans Abroad!!!*
Against Me!!! Live in London!!!: CD
Against Me! tears it up for appreciative Britons, proving that some things are universal. The lyrics of the new song "Americans Abroad" self-consciously ponders their identity as conquerors overseas, but the distinctly American bravado of the bass line almost gives them away. Hear Tom address the crowd with the utmost courtesy. Take note of James's lusty accompanying vocals, which are so much more distinctly his own live. Most importantly, prime that fist and get ready for the next time they come to town. —Susan Chung (Fat Wreck Chords)

ALL TIME LOW: *Put up or Shut up:* CD
All Time Low remind me of Pig-Pen, you know, the character from *Peanuts* who always had the dust cloud around him. Well, on one occasion, Pig-Pen decides it's time to clean up his act (to gain the approval of the snobby Violet). But, Pig-Pen's known for his dirt. It's a part of him. By cleaning himself up (though he gets dirty again quickly—it's in his nature), he becomes something that he's not, and by changing just a few of those surface details, the entire person was changed. With bands like All Time Low: they're like punk, but cleaned up. All the elements that make punk what it is—be it in the sound, in the politics, or in the fun—seem to be rinsed clean here. There's still enough lingering elements to make it feel familiar, but something is definitely not right. While this was playing, I couldn't help but imagine videos filled with panning cameras, wide legged-stances made more ridiculous by their too-tight pants, and eyes rolled upwards in the now standard (thanks Billie Joe) pop punk eyes. I like my punk like the *Peanuts* Gang liked Pig-Pen: dirty, not because that's how he *should* be, but because that's the only way he *can* be. —Megan (Hopeless)

AMOEBIA MEN, THE:
...Let the Infection Set In: CD
If anybody lost a whole bunch of delay, I think I found most of it. And while it's the least bluntly brutal thing I've heard from C.N.P., it's still plenty fucked up, what with the rampant and aforementioned echo, dissonant guitar and off-kilter timings, woozy synth swells and so forth. Too bad these guys weren't around when I lived in Richmond; you couldn't dance to the noise rock we had then. —Cuss Baxter (C.N.P.)

AVATARS, THE:
Never a Good Time: CD

I see three women and two guys on a cover and start to think bubblegum for some reason. Well, I was wrong. This gang has some rocking toughness going for them. It's a mixture of early KISS and the Runaways meeting the first Pretenders record sound. Songs that are catchy but have grit and make you wanna rock out. I was so ready to dismiss, but was given a good slap in the face and was made to pay attention. —Donofthedeath (No Fun)

B.A. BARACUS: *Self-titled:* CD

Ten songs of pretty damn good hard rock/garage punk from Columbus, OH. Much better than most bands that play this style since they know when to let off the gas and let the songs groove a little. I was a little skeptical when I first saw the name, but it seems like they are actually T fans and not just trying to be "ironic" or "funny." Fans of Bad Wizard, Hellacopters, New Bomb Turks, Spitfires, and Electric Frankenstein are gonna wanna be all over this. —Mike Frame (Sonic Swirl)

BAD REACTION:
Symptoms of Youth: CD

Los Angeles punk with enough pops and stops to avoid the straight-up blasé hardcore tag: at least to this listener. Nice instrumental interplay here and there, healthy use of backgrounds vocals, all that stuff. The majority of the songs are pointed rants against jaded scenesters, rumor-mongers, Hollywood livin', and folks who don't think for themselves. They only stray into meathead territory once or twice (there is the requisite song about someone who has "crossed" the singer one too many times), and they shift gears here and there, like the reggae-

infused intro to "Murder in Jamaica" and the last tune pronouncing the band's love for, uh, Gatorade. They steer themselves into a few moments that generally detract from the overall power of the album (Like I said: Gatorade, guys? Come on.) but as a whole, it's definitely a decent attack, and the nice cover art by Alex McVey and the black/white/yellow color scheme makes this fucker look like a long lost '80s gem. This type of shit's generally too bland for me, too paint-by-numbers, but Bad Reaction's smart enough musically to know when to go straight for the throat and when to stand back and let the momentum build. Nice work, for the most part. —Keith Rosson (Destroy All Records)

BANG! BANG!: *Decked Out:* CD

Indie dance pop from this Chicago three-piece, with dueling male-female vocals. Veers off into the realm of pretentiousness at times and "borrows" a big chunk of their sound from the late '80s to early '90s Dischord Records roster. But with a disco beat. The song "(I Heard You Singing) On the Radio" cleverly starts off with, surprise, the sound of someone spinning through channels on the radio dial. Dear lord. They redeem themselves a bit with a Gun Club cover. —Josh Benke (Morphius)

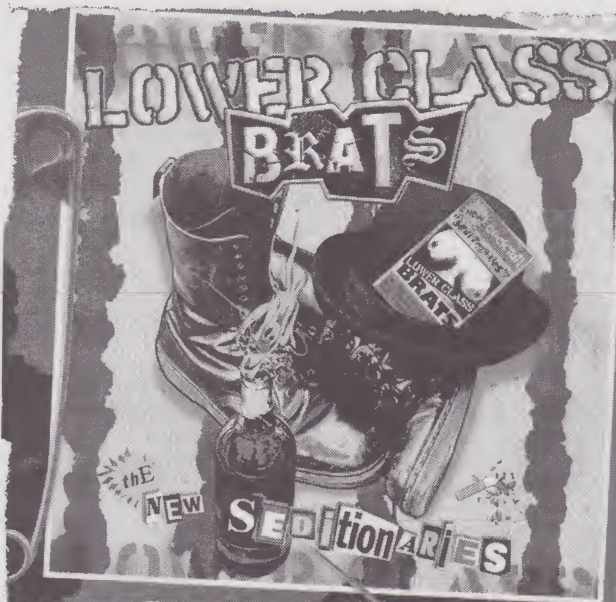
BEACH PATROL: *The Grass Is Always Greener Til You Get There:* CD

Well, there's certainly nothin' wrong with getting a big box of records shipped to ya from the West Coast, and havin' the best of the bunch (by far) being the one knocked out by the local dudes (except for the part where you open up the local dudes' CD case so you can give the album a quick refresher spin before you write the review, only to find that your

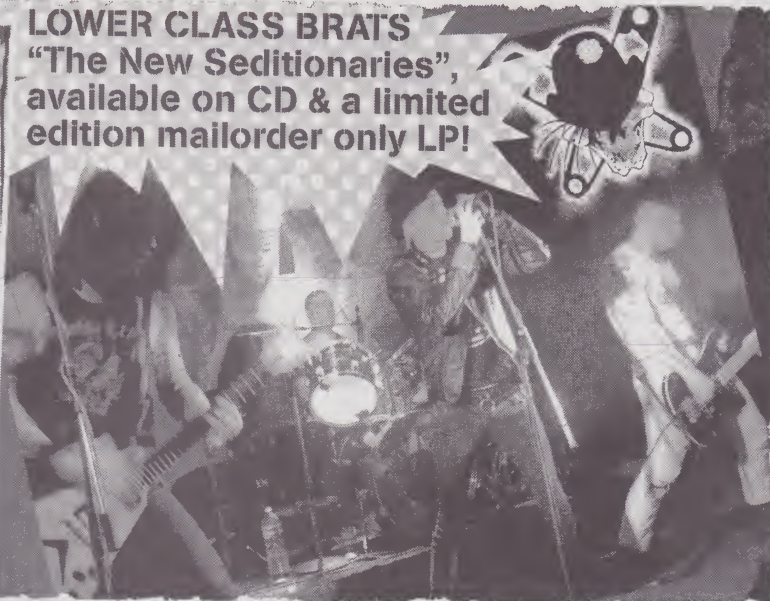
Eugene Edwards CD in the Beach Patrol jewel box, which means that the Beach Patrol CD is probably in somebody else's jewel box, and, in fact, there's probably a chain of ten or twenty mis-boxed CDs somewhere, therefore the Beach Patrol CD itself is quite unrecoverable at this late hour [so i hope i took good notes]! I mean, Green Bay has always been a city that digs good power-pop/pop-rock type stuff, it's just that the bands from around here have never really figured out how to actually *play* the shit (unless i am merely projecting my own fondness of/incompetence in the genre on the city as a whole) (and, believe you me, "whole" is the correct term). *Enter Beach Patrol!* Recording at some studio i never even heard of, and using such fonts as Marker Felt and Marker Felt Thin, these guys have successfully positioned themselves as a sort of backwoods Figgs (although, for better or for worse, i don't see Beach Patrol ever turning a particularly clever phrase or coming up with a particularly sharp put-down), successfully channeling a fully functional, if often utilitarian, highly amplified fourth Monkees album thing, if you know what i mean, and i'm fairly certain you don't (I mean, listen to the first song, "Starcrossed Girl." *Come on, that's the fourth Monkees album right there!* It even kinda looks like the song "Star Collector," doesn't it? Doesn't it? Admit i'm right and i'll stop right now!). Heck, "Come Runnin'" sounds like something Titledown's own Fun w/Atoms would've played at one AM on a Saturday night in like 1984, these guys probably weren't even born then, and album closer, "Top Down," is so good that you'll forgive the fact that it's not the Teenage Head song of the same name. *What's it all mean?* I dunno. There must be something in the water. *OOPS, WRONG BAND!* BEST SONG: "Top Down" BEST SONG TITLE: "Trampoline," because it sort of sounds like "Carousel" by the Hollies, but going the other way FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The band's most popular song, "Amelia," is also their dumbest, ranking right down there with those morbid early '70s AM radio hits like "Jackie Baby" by Helen Reddy and that song about how the kids got trapped in the cave and ate Gregory. Also, if Amelia's car broke down "she said," and Amelia was killed shortly thereafter, whom did she inform that her car broke down??? —Rev. Nørb (Duck On Monkey)

BEAVERS, THE: *Are Back! 7" EP*

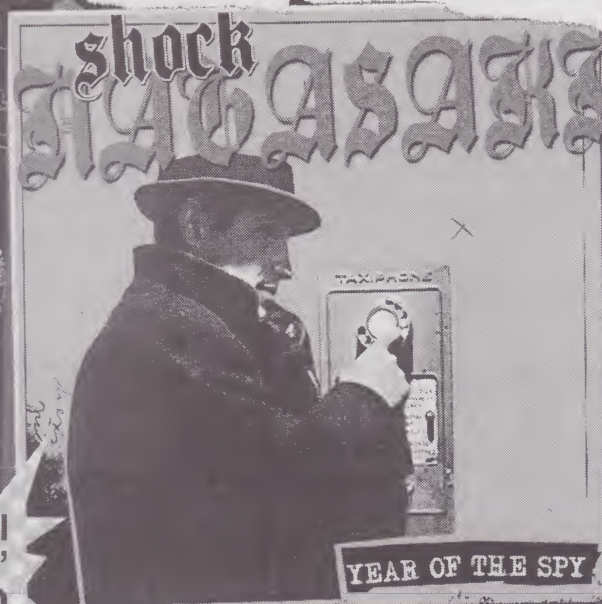
God damn, sometimes you hear a record and it reminds you why you gave such a prick-ass review to the new Radio Birdman album...i think it's been a good ten years since the last 7" i have (thus the "Are Back!" appellation no doubt), but no matter whether these Beavers have been busy or merely in stasis, they bash forth two CLASSICS (and one sturdy instrumental filler piece) regardless! Kinda like the fuzzed out retro-Farfery of



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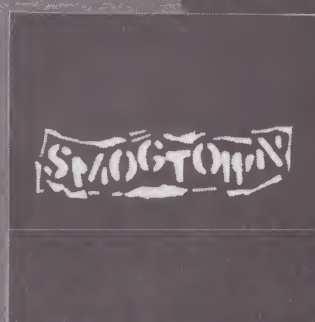
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Les Sexareenos, but welded to a legit '70s punk rock bashing technique ala, perhaps, the Subs (although they don't really sound like the Subs at all, though I guess the 45 sleeve is pretty close to being the same color as the "Gimme Your Heart" PS). If I am not being cleverly deceived, the guitarist is utilizing one of my personal favorite modes of attack: Playing bashed-out punk on an electric twelve-string (Six strings? HA! That's like having an amp that only goes up to five!) I hear what sounds like female vocals in "I'm On No One's Side," but there doesn't appear to be a girl in the bunch, unless "Paul" is a girl's name in Holland. Needless to say, this is taking the concept of "Beaver Hunt" in a direction I don't care to follow. I suggest you buy this, or fuck off. AND fuck off, actually. BEST SONG: "I'm On No One's Side" BEST SONG TITLE: "Daf 66" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Logo by Sjors! -Rev. Nørb (High School Refuse)

BLACK ANGELS, THE: *Passover*: CD

First release from this Austin band. Psychedelic, trippy music that will cause your mind to wander into dark realms of the unknown. "Black Grease" and "Call to Arms" were particularly scary to me. Think if the 13th Floor Elevators and The Velvet Underground's vans crashed in the desert, and Doug Yule got in the wrong van, and Roky Erickson got in the other. They both drove away but played their respective gigs that night.

You would then have some vague inkling of what The Black Angels are about. I guess I'm going to have to go see them live so I can see what a 'drone machine' looks like. -Sean Koeppen (Light In The Attic)

BLOODBATH AND BEYOND:

Jihadcore: 7" EP

It's a supergroup of somewhat known, yet highly loved and respected guys. If drunk is the new genius, then these four dudes have made the Manhattan Project of partying, (substituting cubes of Pabst for Little Boy), puking, and pooping Adderall yellow. What that means is if you like any one of the following bands—of which Paddy, Davey, Ben, and Mike hail from—you'll just have to go out and buy a record you don't own and already like: Dillinger Four, Tiltwheel, J.Church, Cleveland Bound Death Sentence, The Minds, Snakepit comics (not a band, but you get the idea), The Observers, and Dan Padilla. It's duct tape, serious-thought-but-they-won't-readily-admit-it, create-your-own-world-and-live-in-it-while-having-a-good-time punk. -Todd (Little Deputy)

BORN/DEAD: *Endless War...*

Repetition: CD

Still don't own a record player? If DIY punk is your thing, you'd better get one. There are a lot of releases out there that do not see the digital realm, but sometimes you luck out: case in point here. A compilation of tracks from this Bay Area band

that includes tracks from their split LP with Consume, 2005 tour 12" and their most recent 7" *Repetition/Fear*. To top that off, for those with computers, two videos are included. But, the music is the key here. Hard-driving punk that is dark and forceful with a tone of the dismal state of the world. Their dual vocal attack of lyrics is intelligent and political. Punk is guitar-driven, and they power out the chords with fierce determination. The bassist brings the lower octaves to add punch. As a trio, the drummer ties it all together to make a cohesive expression of noise. Many might have noticed them on the past Subhumans tour. I personally have seen them twice, and the second time they knocked me on my ass. So the next time they come through your town, take notice. Also, getting a copy before you see them would help you sing along while they are playing live. -Donofthedeath (Prank)

BOTTLED VIOLENCE: 7" EP

Goddamn, these guys are pissed at everybody, man. East Coast-styled hardcore, sounding quite a bit like Paint It Black if they weren't already at punk superstar status before they'd even formed and had to work their mojo from the ground up. Not bad at all. -Keith Rosson (Suburban Waste)

BRISTLE: 1984450: CD

Bristle is one of those bands whose name you always see on the buttflaps of crusty kids, and deservedly so. They play straight-ahead, no bullshit punk

rock. Think of Rancid back when they were a three-piece and didn't play ska songs, mixed with a little bit of Grindle or Filth. Cool cover art and a Big Boys cover song dedicated to Biscuit. This shit is the real deal. -Ben Snakepit (Rodent Popsicle)

BRUTAL KNIGHTS:

The Pleasure Is All Thine: CD

Ex-members of Teen Crud Combo here with a sound that brings to mind Wimpy from the Queers fronting Zeke. Fast and snotty with the requisite "shocking" sex references. I love the Queers, Early GG, and the Angry Samoans, but I am mostly burnt out on the boring "shock value" themes of bands still playing this stuff. Of course none of that would matter if the songs are good enough, as M.O.T.O. and Head continue to prove. Hell, I even dug the latest Jabbers disc but this just kind of sits there. If you still feel that songs about stuff that has been done to death are funny or you wanna offend easy targets like your Pat Robertson loving uncle, this is for you. Tesco Vee fans will love this and I guess you can decide from that whether this is for you or not. -Mike Frame (Deranged)

CANDYGRAM FOR MONGO:

The Red Pill: CD

Terrible lite punk that sounds like a neutered Anti-Nowhere League (Anti-Balls League: "So what, so what, you boring little nincompoop"). I had this whole analogy worked out about how when a dog eats cat shit, its own shit

A.D.D. RECORDS

new releases:

Dukes Of Hillsborough
"Telling Time By Our Vices" CD

Vena Cava / Sick Sick Birds
split 7"

No Truth Lies
"Self Titled" CD

Dan Padilla
"Self Titled" CD

Watson
"Killing Momentum" CD EP

still available:


The Tim Version
"Prohibition Starts Tomorrow" CD

Tiltwheel
"Hair Brained Scheme Addicts LP

Vaginasore Jr
"Self Titled" CD

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is *two* kinds of shit, but geez—this record is like four kinds of shit. Shitty artwork, funk-rock instrumental, and shitty punk rock. And get this monkey shit: on the back it says “We’d like to thank the ladies—all the ladies, really—but three in particular [three names, presumably the three band members’ partners]”, while the lyrics to “Porkchop” go, “Baby, I like chicken-fried steak, yeah, but nothing’s like your pork chop. Once I get started eating, I never want to stop. So show me a little stocking, now don’t make me beg. Lift up your skirt now darling and show me some leg.” That, my friends, is an asshole. (See also “She’s Not on the Menu” by SNFU, 1984). —Cuss Baxter (C4Media)

CAPITAL: *Signal Corps*: CD

Don’t know what it is about New York (or particular areas of it—Long Island anyone?) but goddamn, there’s some good music coming out of that area right now. Capital’s certainly not spearheading a new movement or anything, the ground they’re tilling is pretty familiar, but rest assured they sound confident as shit and are friggin’ spot-on in their attack. *Signal Corps* sounds like a titanium-solid merging of Paint It Black-styled hardcore and Strike Anywhere’s brand of melodic punk—it toes the line somewhere between the two, and while I don’t think it’s necessarily quite up to par with either of those bands, it’s still damn good, especially considering we’re talking about a band’s first release. If they manage to stick around

for any period of time, I can totally see these guys becoming a mainstay, one of those bands that newer, younger bands eventually begin to draw influences from. Like I said, they’re not there yet, but as it stands now, *Signal Corps* is still a damn fine record, and I can’t wait to hear what they hit us with next. —Keith Rosson (Iron Pier)

CHINATOWN: *Self Title* (sic): CD

...i thought this band was GAY with a capital AY after i read their poorly typeset, inkjet-printed hype sheet which contained phrases such as “Atlantic Records was interested in Chinatown” and “After playing a stellar show to a packed house of screaming girls (who climbed the stage and attacked the band)”, then had the album name come up as, literally, “Self Title” in iTunes—as in “WE THINK WE’RE SO FUCKING HOT SHIT AND BIG TIME YET ARE SUCH A BUNCH OF DIMBULBS THAT WE DON’T EVEN REALIZE THAT THE PHRASE WE’RE GROPING FOR IS ‘SELF-TITLED’, NOT THAT WE SHOULD ACTUALLY BE TITLING AN UNTITLED ALBUM TO BEGIN WITH”—but, upon closer inspection, it really kinda looks like their guitar player is wearing an “I’m Into Boris The Sprinkler And I Throw Like A Fag” T-shirt in one of the photos (although i cannot conclusively establish this), and, all in all, the album is a homogenously solid enough black leather pants wearin’, Faster Pussycat wannabe-in’ (therefore two levels of wannabe-ism

removed from Aerosmith, the root of all that is right and good in these cases) affair to be pleasant enough to merit a spin or two (not that i’m going on record as endorsing that kind of thing, mind you), therefore i relented and officially proclaim this band “not as gay as i originally thought” and the album “actually kinda cool.” Okay, girls, back to your scheduled rampaging. BEST SONG: “Streetlight Parasite” BEST SONG TITLE: “Streetlight Parasite.” Yes, it’s *that* kind of band. FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I’ve given the matter some thought, and have come to the conclusion that whether or not the band took their name from the Devil Dogs song cannot be proven either way. —Rev. Nerb (Sonic Swirl)

CLOROX GIRLS:

This Dimension b/w Animal Eyes: 7"

This one’s all about the packaging—red, one-sided square vinyl with the b-side hand spray painted with the band’s name (try downloading that on MP3)—because both of these songs have been previously released. (“Animal Eyes” is a cover of lead singer, Justin’s, dad’s old L.A. band, the Defenders, who sung it when they played here.) All that said, the Clorox Girls are fungal. I didn’t find them insta-brilliant nor whoah-kill-me-great right from the start, but there was this nagging tickle that made me put their records back on over and over again. What could have been empty, calorie-free agitated pop has proven to be rattling, spastic punk in the vein of the Cheifs and Weirdos

that gains weight and nutritional value the more it gets played. Real and really good. Recap: fuckin’ cool artifact—one that I’m keeping—but not essential if you’re in it just for the tunes. —Todd (Jonny Cat)

CROSSBRED:

Take off Your Fuckin’ Vanity: 3" CD

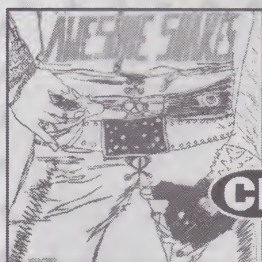
Twenty-minute mildly harsh racketscape with exciting surges, swelling rumbles, razor feedback spikes, crystalline oscillations, square waves, one vaguely rhythmic segment, machine noises, heavily-altered music samples, and a little yelling. Comes in a plastic petri dish with red stuff. —Cuss Baxter (Apop)

DAGGERS, THE: *Tear It to Pieces*: CD

Regurgitated mid-to-late ‘90s L.A. punk, a la The Humpers (RIP), but from Canada—that explains everything. —Jessica T (Sloth)

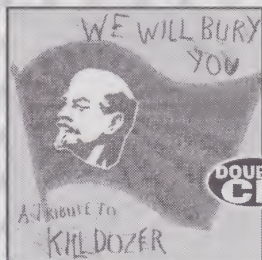
DAN PADILLA: *Self-titled*: CD

J. Wang (lead singer of Dan Padilla) is one of the most earnest people I’ve ever met, and it shows through in his lyrics: “A simple life should stand for something/ Don’t ask me what because I don’t know.” The approach of questioning (whether the realm is personal or global) without preaching a solution is refreshing. With songs ranging from the serious and political (“Fear and Tera and Scarlett O’Hara” and “We Run”) to the less serious “Shit’s Tight (their version of the Misfits’ “We Bite”) and a sound like Tiltwheel and Altaira



Awesome Snakes - Venom

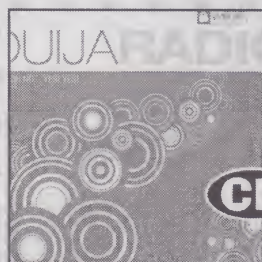
Danny + Annie of the Soviettes, awesome party record!



We Will Bury You:

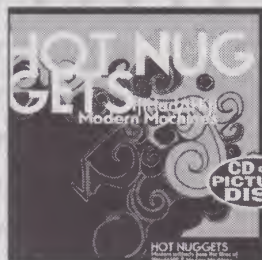
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Ouija Radio - Oh No...Yes! Yes!

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(there are members of both in Dan Padilla) birthed their love child on the western shores of Florida, I can't see how someone couldn't find something not to like on this one. It makes me long for summer, slow days, and fast friends. —Megan (A.D.D.)

DATELESS: Everything Could Turn Out Right This Time: CD

I'm kind of looking forward to the forthcoming Screeching Weasel/Lillingtons/Queers style pop punk revival. I think we've learned a lot from the mistakes of the past and we're ready to try this again. We're going to have to be a lot more selective as to whom we hand out leather jackets to but I think we can make this work. Now Dateless, I'm issuing you all Members Only jackets. You're in on a trial basis. You've got to prove yourself by working on your choruses and doing a drive by on a metalcore band. Bring me back a bloody bible from Underoath's tour bus and we'll get you a real leather jacket you can wear with pride. Weasel por vida esé. —Stevo (Self-released)

DEJA MORT / TEKKEN: Split 7"

Two French punk bands. It's oddly reassuring that—barring a shared language, over 5,000 miles of separation between France and L.A., and two different cultures—that punks can artfully gripe about essentially the same things (internet warriors flaming bands but having no real friends and the over-ubiquity of back patches are in the laundry list). Deja Mort is right at my

speed. They wrap and warp cataclysm, sinewy keyboard, desperation, '80s punk, and misbehaving android background vocals around a French-sounding version of *Ass Cobra*-era Turbonegro. Cool. Tekken: You can almost hear the bullet belts tinkle in the background. It's world hardcore with a crust center and metal hinges. Thankfully, they've got more than one speed, so the drumming doesn't sound like a direct feed into a metronomic cement mixer. Actually, they kept on making me think of infested rats playing dungeon music at hyper speed while being attacked by vultures made of poop, which is probably exactly what they were shooting for. Liked it. —Todd (Trahison)

DEMOLITION DOLL RODS:

There Is a Difference: CD

Joyful, primitive sounds soaked in whiskey and sleaze. The drumming is so simple you'd think Mo Tucker's mongoloid brother was thumping out beats behind the kit. Plenty of guitar fuzz and soulful, Joplin-esque vocals make this sound like a greasier version of the Subsonics. *There is a Difference* is a celebration of the carnal, a lusty, punk blues explosion of sex and rock'n'roll. Recommended. —Josh Benke (Swami)

DEMOLITION DOLL RODS:

There Is a Difference: CD

Swamp-blues swagger that plods along at two miles an hour. I don't know, like if the Muffs and/or the Detroit Cobras were collectively hit

by semis, dragged along the freeway past a few exits, subsequently hurled into the ocean and hauled to the sea bottom by turtles? The point is: it's slooow, damaged and, yeah, torturous. I've heard the name for years, and they're on Swami, so there must be tons of kids who dig the slop-savant, I-could-walk-faster-than-this rock they're peddling, but I'm not one of them. There are a few moments on here ("Lil' Naked" resonates eerily like something from *Horses*-era Patti Smith), but the good just doesn't come anywhere near outweighing the awful. —Keith Rosson (Swami)

DEMON'S CLAWS:

Live in Spring Branch, TX: 12" EP

Demon's Claws spit out (I don't think "play" is the right word) root slappy, slap happy slop-punk so raw it makes Billy Childish sound like the Engelbert Humperdinck. Like if Dan Melchior drank a gallon of Thunderbird and three pots of coffee. (At once, I mean, and then performed some songs—I don't imagine he'd sound like this if he was just sitting around reading a book or preparing a revert.) Barely-tuned guitars sunk in reverb and a one-two drumkit that sounds to consist of just a kick, snare and a cymbal or two (drummer Skip Jensen also does a one-man-band thing and is, or was, in the Scat Rag Boosters, if that rings anyone's bathtub) set up Royce Muckler's mouthful-of-grubs gibber and wail (and, furthermore, shriek and moan). I don't think the "Live" in the title means a public performance, but I have no

doubt the recordings were done in one take, with the exception of "incidental noises" recorded in a cave (actual cave, not metaphor for heavy-handed reverb). Also, really nice black and blue marbled vinyl; possibly the most beautiful record I've ever seen. Beats pink and white marbled's pansy ass to a pulp. —Cuss Baxter (Hook or Crook)

DIE PRINCESS DIE:

Lions Eat Lions: CD

Jerky and loud dance-wave with some of your pugilistic Lightning Bolt action, a bit of your quavery Locust keyboard business, a little of your hyper rave synth that always comes out of convertibles (at least in San Diego), assorted bleeps and squonks, a couple feedbacks and a very large number of carefully-arranged drum beats. —Cuss Baxter (GSL)

DOG ASSASSIN:

Imperial States of America: 7" EP

Sweet zombie Jesus, I don't know where this came from, but I'm glad it got here. Five songs of awesome thrash that could probably be looked at on the same level as anything on Havoc. To sweeten the deal, this came with free stuff, and the vinyl looks great (half black, half red). But the kicker—the cover has *Darth Vader* on it! This is too good to be true. At first, I thought I may have to donate this to the Star Wars bathroom in Hotel Astoria, but screw that, I'm not giving this away so easily. —Joe Evans III (Spacement)

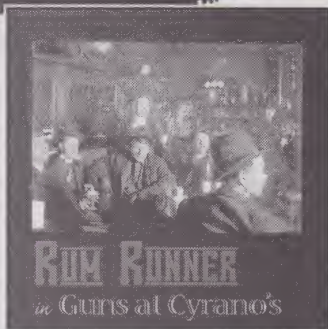
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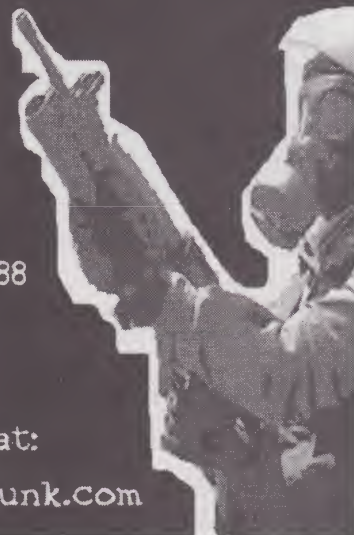
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DOWN AND AWAY:

To Serve and Protect: CD

Swedish band that perfectly blends the middle ground between fellow countrymen Smalltown and Bombshell Rocks. Cool mid-tempo street punk with a real rock'n'roll undercurrent. Reminds me a little of the more recent Ducky Boys stuff, which is high praise. If you can't get enough of that catchy sub Rancid sound, this is one of the best bands you can hope to find right now. —Mike Frame (Mad Butcher)

DRI: Dirty Rotten LP (on CD): CD

After numerous reissues with different mixes, different covers and assorted bonus tracks added, Beer City has released this, the *Dirty Rotten EP*, with its original track listing, original mix and original cover art (gotta say, I haven't seen a "mange" cut in many a moon). Hard to believe it's been twenty-three years since this monster was unleashed on an unsuspecting hardcore public. The thing to keep in mind is that when this was originally released as a 7" EP in 1983, precious few bands came close to the velocity these guys demonstrated on this record—and they were even faster live. By cramming twenty-two tracks onto a 7", they also snatched the title of "We Crammed the Most Songs onto a 45" champions from Canada's The Neos, who only managed a paltry fourteen. Take that, back-bacon eaters! USA! USA! USA! Further, that speedy little slab of wax influenced a whole swath of bands,

especially metalheads like Slayer and, I'm figuring, Napalm Death, to up the ante a bit. Hell, I personally can remember my jaw hitting the floor when I first heard "Blockhead" on a late-night radio show back then and becoming an instant fan (although my brother buying the "LP" version and his insistence on playing it on 45 instead of 33 1/3 for the next decade because he thought it was "too slow" diminished its luster for me a bit). Although time, legions of apers, and the race to make music at ever greater velocity have conspired to reduce the impact of this a bit now for first-time listeners, it still remains a pummeling thing of wonder—twenty-two songs in eighteen minutes, all of it fast almost to the point of silliness, with nary a second wasted. It was a damn shame this remains their high point, as they degenerated into a bad speed metal band within three to four years of its release. Hopefully, Kurt and the boys ain't trying to soak the hordes with full-LP prices for it, though, 'cause no matter the format, this is still a 45's worth of music and to pass it off as anything more is a bit disingenuous. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.beercity.com)

DUEL, THE:

Let's Finish What We Started: CD

Band from London that would easily get lumped into a label as a '77 punk band. A lot of those characteristics are there, but so much more is put on the plate. They have the rock elements like many bands from that era, but they also infuse some new wave and

death rock into the mix: like Siouxsie and the Banshees with the Bauhaus meets Gary Numan at a Vice Squad gig. They go beyond the punk rock standard of guitars and drums and add keyboards. What caught my attention right off the bat is the great vocal stylings of lead singer, Tara. She has a great voice that complements well with the music being played. With a different engineer or producer and a better equipped studio, I think they can better capture her true vocal capabilities and really improve upon what they have been building. Live recordings are not my cup of tea, but their cover of the Ramones' "Pet Cemetery" that is on this disc shows that even in a raw situation they can sound good. If they had recorded it in the studio, I think it would have been fantastic. I'll be interested to hear what this band accomplishes on their next release. —Donofthedeaf (Ffruk)

ELECTRIC KISSES,

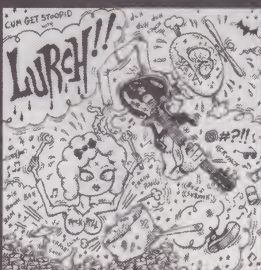
THE: Self-titled: LP

Here's the disclaimer: Mike Frame, who's in this band, does reviews and interviews for us. So take this how you will. The Electric Kisses are Nikki Corvette-style fun. Simple, stripped, direct, clear punk rock that's poppy. They seem so internal and comfortable with punk rock: declaring a person's love is stuck to B-side status, that friends are either dead or have stopped living, and it's all wrapped around one of those honking big lollipops swirled with a rainbow of colors, with a carbon

monoxide center. The one thing I wished on the initial listens: more immediate explosions and pock marks. But it's weird—compared to, say, The Eyeliners or Riff Randles—where, at first, I was floored, and then, later, I wouldn't have minded a little more (which I think those bands were capable of)—The Electric Kisses deliver in dosed drips. The details slowly pop out and splash a new clarity to the songs: "Oh shit, they totally ripped off The Kids cover (down to the tape on the edges)," and "for being lyrics about adolescent-type sounding stuff, they're really seasoned. I don't feel like a pedophile listening to this." So, yup, count me as a fan, more and more with each successive listen. Cool stuff. —Todd (Full Breach Kicks)

ELECTRIC SHADOWS: Break The Rules b/w She's All You Got: 7"

This NYC trio appears to be led by some manner of extra-terrestrial expat from one or another of the ümlaut planets, and are approximately 1.5 levels of Hair more glam than Some Action (i'm not exactly sure of the factor. I'd need to see their hair better). I am quite thankful that this record didn't come with a press sheet of any sort, because the band's mission statement is almost certainly something on the order of "we want to cross the pop hooks of the Raspberries with the swagger of the New York Dolls and Heartbreakers, served up in a hot tub full of T. Rex and Kiss with three quarters of a



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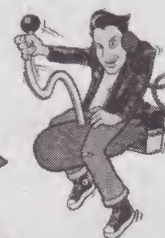
the tattle tales love the ergs! and wanted to say so with this sugar pop gem. more pop than punk and a lullaby for good measure thrown in. feature halle from the "unlovables" fame!

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jigger of Aerosmith and Suzi Quatro as a drain stopper" or similar act of genius. I mean, fuckin'-A, ya feel like blowing your (or their) brains out before you've even taken the record out of the sleeve. BUT, that said, the record does sound reasonably like the aforementioned concoction, and both the songs are kinda good. By the way, the Font Police would like to see you in Room 101 at your earliest convenience. Bring your own rat. BEST SONG: "Break The Rules" BEST SONG TITLE: "She's All You Got" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: No offense to the dead or the living, but i saw Nikki Sudden, and he sucked. -Rev. Nørb (Douchemaster)

END OF ALL:

Same Shit but Different: CD

Yet another metal band passing itself off as hardcore. Ugh. -Jimmy Alvarado (Crimes Against Humanity)

ENTROPY:

Gross National Product: 7"

This definitely fits right into the Smogtown, Smut Peddlers, Crowd, early Hunns galaxy. It's got those buzzy-hummy guitars, the New Beach Invasion (West Hollywood Chapter) broken bottles and vials in the sand disease, snot rag vocals, and that "Ooh, we're fucked, but it's sunny outside" vibe. What sets them a bit apart is the superfuzz psychedelia at the edges (don't worry, there's no "jammin'"), but there's that early Mudhoney ballsiness and sickness

that gives them an extra punch, where they coulda just been spinning their tires. To up the ante, it comes in a gorgeous silk-screened cover, with the spider for the hole, and all the little details that make you say, "God damn, vinyl's awesome. This shit's worth protecting." Gorgeous little package, both in sound and sight. -Todd (Bad Idea Music)

EVIL ARMY: Self-titled: CD

You know how sometimes you'll bust out *Kill 'Em All* and listen to it and think, "God, Metallica used to be so awesome, I wish there was a band like that around today?" Well, look no further. Evil Army takes all the best parts of Mustaine-era Metallica, *Dealing With It*-era D.R.I., and a dash of Cryptic Slaughter. It's a wicked good time; no cheesy dive-bomb comedy routines like Municipal Waste or anything, just straight-ahead thrash from a bunch of Tennessee good ol' boys. Get This!! -Ben Snakepit (Get Revenge)

EXTRA DAY FOR RIOTS:

Discography: CD-R

This CD-R comes with a pretty succinct but in-depth band history. It seems that they broke up during recording because the band didn't think the lead vocals were good enough to record (I wish more bands would follow that lead). So, after some time, the singer decides to ignore that and release it himself. Bad mistake. The band was right; the vocals are terrible. Then again, this

seems kind of like the pot calling the kettle black: the music (though they describe themselves as sounding like D4), is super-basic and repetitive. One uninspired pop punk song played nine times. -Megan (self-released)

FEELERS, THE: Self-titled: 7"

The Feelers answer the question of, "What happens when a garage punk band is shredded against Negative Approach's cheese grater, but the Oblivians' desperate, rickety shack is still jumping in the background?" It's a broken arm that you can snap your fingers along to. It's like a chainsaw with a blade that's teethered with sweet, sweet gumdrops or jackhammers lubricated, not with oil, but maple syrup. The result it fully interlocking parts between two things that aren't necessarily supposed to go together, and that makes it all the more memorable. Improves on repeated listens, and is much better than the Willy Wonka-ness of the comparisons in this review. Great, fun punk rock. Remember that? Recorded by Alicia Trout (issue #29's cover lady), and she captures them in full stride, fully fanged, broadly smiling. Excellent. -Todd (Contaminated)

FIGHT LIKE HELL:

Rabid as Wolves: CD

Sinister, brooding, and intense. That's just in the first five minutes of this release. Colorado four-piece evokes the spirit of Suicidal Tendencies ("How Will I Laugh" era) and 24-7 Spyz with the metal two prong cattle

brand of Accept's barnburners. "Walk Alone" and "Money Matters" are the stand-out tunes on this one. Ouch—I think I just got whiplash. Are there free Vicodin samples in the CD sleeve? Dammit! -Sean Koeppenick (Spook City)

FINAL CONFLICT: No Peace on Earth, No Rest in Hell: CD

Even if the music is looser and not as manic as their '80s incarnation, and Ron's vocals are missed, the latest effort from this venerable L.A. hardcore group is a strong one, with topical lyrics that aren't afraid to direct its ire at specific people and subjects rather than deal in hollow generalities. Nice to hear the snippet of the Germs off "Rodney on the Roq," that was tacked onto the end, too. -Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

FIX, THE:

At the Speed of Twisted Thought: CD

Yep, you read that right, kids, we're talking about *thee* Fix here, legendary, long-gone Michigan hardcore band whose 45s fetch a pretty penny from those who play fast 'n' loose with their fundage. Collected here for those of us, not blessed with huge stashes of disposable income are the band's two EPs, their track from the *Process of Elimination* comp, assorted outtakes and a live set from 1981 that sounds like it came straight off the board. Like the Big Boys releases T&G put out last decade, there is also much to read about the band, courtesy of Tesco Vee, Byron Coley, Tim Tinooka (I still have



MAIL OTTER

*NO OTTERS WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS AD.

Attention amoebas, banditos and other sideburned mofos: here there be a sampling of our wares: **Cometbus**, **Abi Yoyos**, **Altaira**, **Ambition Mission**, **Bent Outta Shape**, **Blotto**, **Dan Padilla**, **The Ergs**, **Grabass Charlesons**, **Hot New Mexicans**, **Lookout! Records**, **Modern Machines** (+ new shirt design!), **New Bruises**, **The Steinways**, **This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb**, **This Is My Fist** (+3 TIME T-shirt designs), **Tiltwheel**, **The**



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a couple of copies of *Ripper* fanzine kicking around here somewhere), Thurston Moore and others. For those not in the know, this is not complex, intricate-runs-through-scales-type hardcore made by kids who've spent way too much time honing their "craft." We're talking guttural, virtually tuneless, blunt force trauma thug-rock from a band that was playing hardcore before it had a name, and these tunes still deliver the goods. It amazes me that, some twenty years of development later, so much of what passes for hardcore anymore (and yes, I know there are exceptions, so don't inundate me with lists of said exceptions) can't hold a candle to bands like this. They needed no warp factor nine tempos, state-of-the-art production, or even good gear to beat you upside the head with a song. Gather 'round and hold on tight as I set the stereo volume for "annihilate," 'cause this is literally going to blow your fucking minds.... —Jimmy Alvarado (Touch & Go)

FOUR DEADLY QUESTIONS/ THE ANSWER LIES: Split CD

Four Deadly Questions: Trashy punk with lo-fi vocals that doesn't cling to none of the now-annoying '60s clichés. It's loud and raw in all the ways it should be. Felt kinda cool 'cause I didn't need any Feckweed to figure out where the title of the first song came from. The Answer Lies: Great hardcore that may not be as fast as some, but manages to sound just spastic enough to get the blood pumpin'. —Jimmy Alvarado (Geykido Comet)

FUCKED UP: *Dangerous Fumes: 7"*

The power of satire is in not only knowledge—but a greater understanding—and then a confounding of initial expectations. It's relatively easy to fuck with people and negate them. (i.e. war bad, religion bad, fuck toddlers, go fuck yourself.) It's a magician trick to criticize the very people who will seek out your record. Let's back up. Fucked Up. The band's name alone would prevent ninety-eight percent of the bands in the world from playing a second show. Who'd book 'em beyond a backyard? And one of the remaining two percent of people predisposed to liking a band called Fucked Up have A.D.D. Anything over a minute really tests their music boundaries. So, at the beginning of this—with longer songs (for hardcore) and a restrictive name, we're at one percent. And that's just when Fucked Up's in the blocks, ready to sprint. Here we are at *Dangerous Fumes*, which casually whips out two epics, the reproduction of a painting of naked young boys on the inside of the cover, and a Lolita-style narrative in "Teenage Problems." All this, in lesser hands, would be clumsy and so transparently "offensive" as to be easy to dismiss. However, this Toronto foursome isn't mashing every taboo button on the console blindly. They've calculated it out. The sum total? Challenging and victorious hardcore that questions the very roots from which it was born. It's the undiluted spirit of Black Flag and Poison Idea and it's happening right

now. Welcome to that one percent that rules, defines, and shapes what's to come. —Todd (Deranged)

G.B.H.: *Punk Junkies* CD

A re-release from these grievous limey bastards that has been out-of-print since 1996, *Punk Junkies* finally sees the light in the States a decade later. While it's no *City Baby* or *City Baby's Revenge*, it still packs enough crunch and punch to appeal to both crusty punks and headbangers. —Greg Barbera (SOS)

GENERATORS, THE:

The Winter of Discontent CD

The opening track, "Walking Away," sounds like a late-period Agent Orange outtake. The bulk of the remainder dances on the pop line in the sand Doug's been straddling since the Schleprock days, although the songs here have an almost "epic" feel to them, and are sometimes vaguely reminiscent of Bad Religion's slower efforts. The last two songs are a bit of a departure from the rest—one sports an almost country twang and the other is reminiscent of Mary Hopkin's "Those Were the Days"—and show these guys aren't afraid to stretch a little, although both probably would've hit the mark more accurately with stronger arrangements. All in all, worth blasting in the stereo. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sailor's Grave)

GERSCH, THE: Self-titled: CD

This sounds a lot like Acid King. Slow, heavy stoner rock with

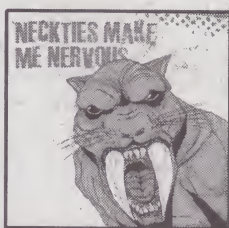
Fleetwood Mac sounding vocals. When I first heard Acid King almost ten years ago, I thought it was kinda lame, third generation jumping-on-the-stoner-rock bandwagon same old shit. At this point, hearing something like this is on par with hearing muzak in the grocery store. It sounds so much like everything else, so uninspired, that you just tune it out. Maybe if you've never heard anything crazier than Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* you might like this, otherwise just avoid it. It sounds like everything else you've heard a million times before. —Ben Snakepit (Tortuga)

GHETTO WAYS: *Hidden Charms b/w M-O-V, I'm Movin' On and Tanny Girls: 7" EP*

GHETTO WAYS: Winks and Blue Eyeshadow b/w Got a Feelin': 7"

Sweet, dirty, alluring, and simple punk rock's like putting a plastic model together. Almost anyone in a civilized country can go to the store, buy the kit, and huff in the garage rock fumes. But you, savvy music listener, know the difference is in how the parts are slid together, that there's such a thing as magic dirt, that if time is taken by the band to cut themselves from the attachments of the mold—when still being obvious in what they're making—you can listen to something special. The more Ghetto Ways songs I'm exposed to, the bigger their spectrum: parts Tina Turner, part Josie Cotton, part '60s soul and part non-arena '70s rock; the music floor's shifting beneath them, but not in a

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up next: J Church split 7" and a Big Drill Car Tribute CD

confusing way. Fueled by Jenna's raspy howl, lean and close guitar playing, Shane's trouble-brining bass, and Henry's in-the-pocket drumming all make the Ghetto Ways much more than a snapped-together, dime-a-dozen attempt at rock'n'roll. Fans of the BellRays and Miss Alex White take notice. —Todd (Hidden Charms: Alien Snatch. Winks: Wicked Singles/Savage)

GIANT HAYSTACKS: *A Rebirth of Our City: 7"*

If Allan, the singer and guitarist of Giant Haystacks, gained a hundred pounds and learned to dance like a gleeful rhinoceros ballerina in homage to D. Boon, the transformation to the Minutemen would be complete. I jest, but Giant Haystacks have taken the honor roll of peppy, sly, smart, and insightful songs that the Minutemen are getting their long-deserved due for, and then have internalized what made them so powerful in the first place. It's not *all* about short-burst, slippery string work, but about the concerns of their world—this time gentrification—while not taking a condescending tone. They also fully understand that the angularity must bend back on durable ligaments, that songs work best when built on dance molecules, and are soaked in platelets of real blood. What this means: the Wayback Machine is gathering dust in the garage, the Giant Haystacks have lit their own torch, and these three songs are great. —Todd (Pizza Pizza)

GILBERT SWITZER / THE HOLD: *State of Nature: Split 7"*

It's always refreshing—when during the tedious chore of laboring through shitty music to review—to be slapped upside the head unceremoniously and without notice. And that's exactly what Nova Scotia's Gilbert Switzer did. This band is a three-piece comprised of a singer, guitar player, and two-piece stand-up drummer who dishes out deranged and deconstructed punk rock. Think Flipper, early Butthole Surfers, the Birthday Party and Crime all tossed into a rocks glass and filled with absinthe. This is art punk of the highest degree, and I love it. The Hold didn't—ahem—hold up as well, having to follow Gilbert Switzer but nonetheless ran their crusty gutter punk like a Fiat Spider stuck in third gear. Nicely packaged to boot! —Greg Barbera (Divorce)

GOLDBLADE: *Punk Rockers in the Dance Hall: CD*

Compilation of some the choice cuts from their last three records. I hear The Clash, some RFTC, and even some Dammed bubbling underneath. It looks like this Manchester band takes no prisoners with their music. Their "AC/DC" is a nice tribute to Angus and the boys—but not quite as good as Down By Law's ode to the band. "Uranus" and "Black Elvis" stood out for me on this one. I'd like to see these guys live someday—I bet they smoke it. —Sean Koepenick (SOS)

GOLDBLADE: *Strictly Hardcore: CD*

A lot of people I know think these guys are the bee's knees, and I will freely admit they aren't without their charms—"Living Outside the Capital" and "16 Tons," to name a couple, ain't too shabby—but like U.S. Bombs, I can't really see what all the fuss is about. For the most part, they sound like a Sham knockoff, albeit a serviceable one, without the politics and righteous anger, and I'm still too fueled by that anger to be impressed by what feels like a watered-down re-creation, no matter how deep the roots of those responsible run. It could be I'm totally obtuse and just not seeing the obvious, but frankly I just don't get it and can think of so many more bands worth the hoopla. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GOLDSTARS, THE: *Purple Girlfriend: CD*

Neutered bar rock played by the numbers. Sounds like the bands that play on stages at the casinos downtown, rehashing '70s rock with crummy, extended guitar solos, dopey, clichéd lyrics ("You got a fire, little baby, and I ain't gonna put you out," "I ain't scared of a girl who knows how to rock'n'roll" and "I got a girl who's always late") and uncommitted jungle calls. Makes Steve Miller sound like the Milkshakes. —Josh Benke (Pravda)

GONADS: *Old Boots, No Panties: CD*
Bushell's oi band serves up another helping of baldie-rock full of

cockney cultcha and lowbrow humor. Although much of the reliance on "rock" guitars 'n' such ain't my cup o' tea, songs like "Infected" were funny enough and the back cover piss-take of Ian Dury's "New Boots and Panties" cover was good for a laugh. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GORCH FOCK: *Thriller: CD*

First off, you're going to think of Unsane due to the thuddy nature of things, and then presently you'll think of the Cows because of the trombone, then later you'll think about Scratch Acid since there's a Scratch Acid song, then you'll think about the Cows some more, and maybe Duh or Steel Pole Bath Tub, but in reality Gorch Fock is named after a boat and boy do they sound like it. —Cuss Baxter (Australian Cattle God)

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT: *Ronald McVomits 14 Song Happy Meal: 7"*


Nothing gets me more excited than fourteen songs on a 7". Especially when one of the songs is called "God Is an A-Hole!" Pretty cool. This is straight-forward, female-fronted punk with a humorous approach to political issues. With Sound Idea's Bob Suren on bass how could it not rip? Also contains the sickest coloring book ever! —Daryl (Bacon Towne)

HAMMERLOCK: *True Grit: The First Five Years: CD*

Oh, Hammerlock. I used to listen to a lot of this stuff in the late '90s and early into this decade. This band


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and songs seem to hold up a lot better than I might have expected and better than a lot of their contemporaries. This disc has my favorite tune ever by Hammerlock, "Cold Coors." A great bar rocker with an awesome mid-tempo sound and a big catchy chorus. I wish they would write more like that. That is where they are at their best; mid tempo and rockin'. Pretty much dug all of these tunes though after not hearing them for a good five years or so. This is a collection of their out of print first two albums on Man's Ruin so there is a total of twenty-nine songs on here. A pretty good deal for your buck. Real cool Steve Earle and Merle Haggard covers to boot. —Mike Frame (Steel Cage)

HAPPY HATE ME NOTS:
The Good That's Been Done...
An Anthology: 2 x CD

There's that old saying: "Never judge a two-disc anthology of a now-defunct Australian band by its horrifically ugly cover." I mean, seriously, the art on this thing is positively awful and totally misleading—I'm talking Dayglo porpoises frolicking amid Photoshopped "tripping acid" backgrounds. If I saw this in a record store, I'd be expecting either some sort of sick, dick-numbing Phish worship or a few hours of really bad house/trance music. Instead, shockingly, HHMN manage to dish out a potent and mostly consistent crossbreed of mid-period Stiff Little Fingers and straight ahead power pop that's really, really catchy. Two discs of this stuff,

and while there are certain drawbacks throughout (they have a tendency to slip in a light and strangling pop ballad here and there, like the lilting "Blue Afternoon," that I could have really done without) it's generally pretty steady in its kickassness. On the punk spectrum, this one's not kicking out much radiation, though I bet they came across as more jagged and mean live. Still, if authentic, mid-to-late '80s power pop blows your hair back, this one'll do it for you; two discs, plenty of liner notes, featuring the majority of their released material, including b-sides and live radio stuff. —Keith Rosson (Feel Presents)

HARD-ONS:

Most People Are a Waste of Time: CD
Loud pop that falls somewhere between the Fastbacks and the Ramones, which unfortunately means it sounds like the Lemonheads or something. —Cuss Baxter (Bad Taste)

HEADS, THE: *Under the Stress of a Headlong Drive: CD*

Mudhoney eats the brown acid. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

HEARTATTACKS, THE: *Your Lies: 7" EP*

The World At Large refers to this band as the "Swedish Teengenerate." The label claims that they are actually the Swedish Registrators. I refute both parties, and declare them to be the Swedish Phantom Rats. **WE CAN NEVER BE FRIENDS! NONE OF US! MORTAL ENEMIES**

FOR LIFE! I will form a discussion group where we can settle these issues before our differences tear us apart. **BEST SONG:** "Floozie of the Neighbourhood" **BEST SONG TITLE:** Same, I guess **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I don't know the name of that Goner Records font. —Rev. Nørb (Plastic Idol)

HEIMATLOS: *La Seconde Nécessaire 1982-1988: CD*

A "complete recordings" collection courtesy of a band purported to be France's first true "hardcore" band. Compiled here are ninety tracks from assorted releases, demos, live cuts, and even a version of one of their songs performed by another band. Musically, much of this pretty smokin', with a nice BGK burn to much of the proceedings, and maybe a dash of Dead Kennedys, Mob 47 and others thrown in for color here and there. The lyrics are sung in French, German, Spanish, Finnish, Swedish and English, which has to be some kind of record. Having heard nary a note from them prior, I'm must say I'm mightily impressed. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ratbone)

INFECTED:

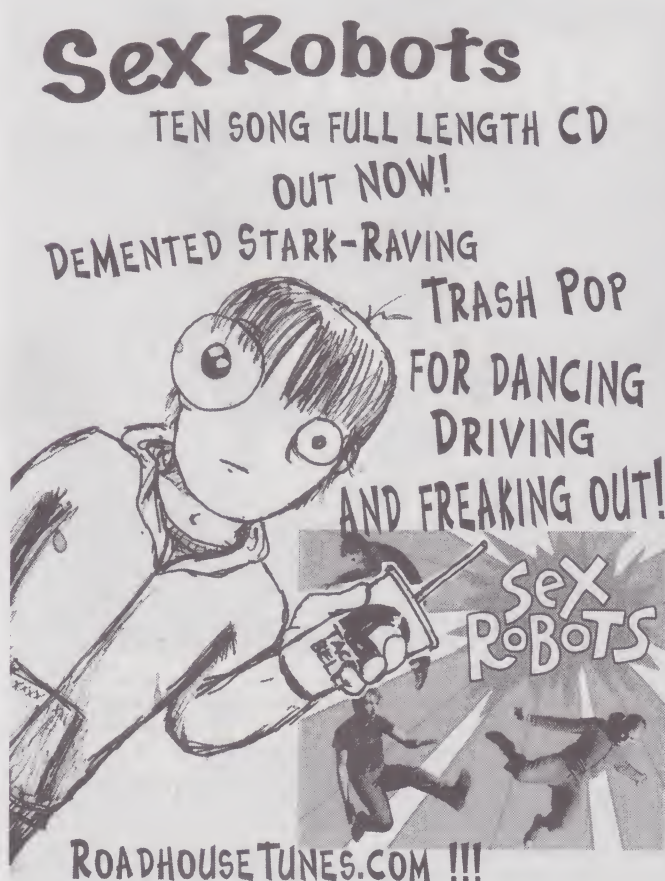
Tales of the Tortured Mind: CD

I am all for posthumous discographies, especially for bands that've long since disbanded and never really played that much outside their hometowns. In the case of Infected, that's not entirely the case, as they apparently toured quite a few times,

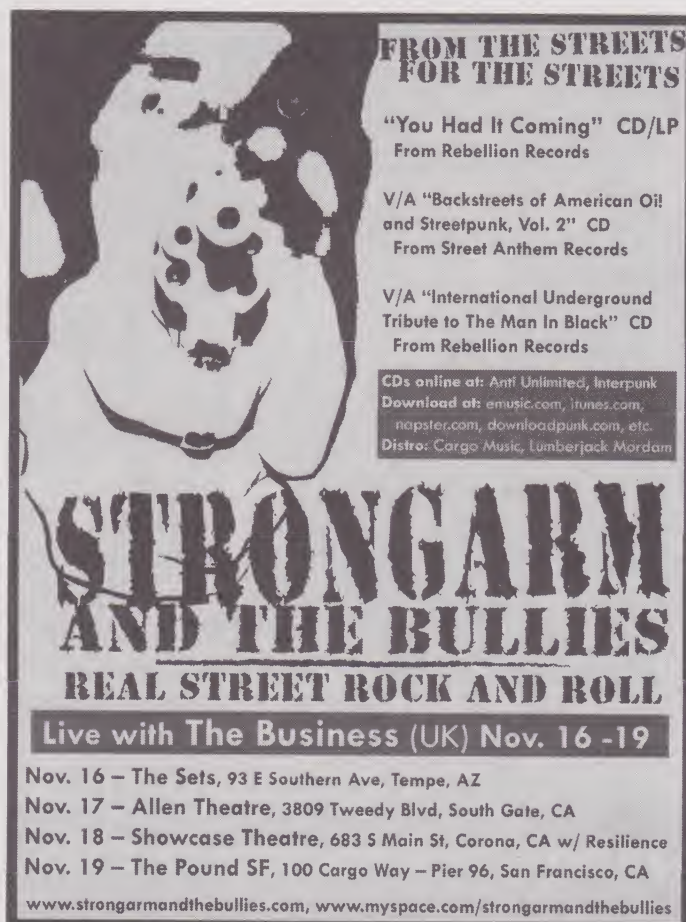
the first of which was a two-month stint of the States with Raw Power, which would lead me to believe that more people would've heard of them before. Anyway, these dudes were working within the framework of a pretty standard punk template, but that doesn't mean that *Tales...* is bad, or even that generic, just that you know what you're coming into here. While the liner notes are almost apologetic about how rough some of this sounds, I think it adds rather than detracts to the whole thing. As a whole, Infected sounds like a more venomous, pissed-off Crimpshrine without the hippie undertones. Only complaint is that the CD starts to drag a bit by the end, but that's just because it's a near-complete discography (the last four songs are from their never-released LP); I'd start to get burnt by a lot of bands after twenty-one songs. As a whole, this one's pretty decent. —Keith Rosson (Eugene)

IRA: *The Body and the Soil: CD*

Debut from this German five piece. I like a band that has the nerve to put a fifty-seven second song on the same record with a fifteen minute plus piece. Large, volcanic, sheets of sound protrude from this record like a broken bone. Hard to describe them with some precision. Sonic Youth meets Pelican? Hum meets Dillinger 4? You'll have to be the judge but this does have so many ups and downs you'll probably get carsick. Intriguing. —Sean Koepenick (Go-Kart Europe)



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**ISTUKAS OVER DISNEYLAND, THE:
O Guinu: CD**

Mid tempo to sometimes fast garagey pop punk from the Philippines. Mostly sung in English, but there are a few numbers that I believe are sung in Tagalog: the title track being one of them. That track stood right out with a smoother flow of vocal delivery while they blazed through a faster punk number. The English tracks tend to sound slow to compensate for the uncomfortableness of the language. The Tagalog tracks are the memorable tracks which showcases their energy. The other tracks just come off unpished and awkward. —Donofthedeath (Cat Food Money)

**JAY REATARD:
Hammer / Miss You: 7" EP**

Dude, the title track sounds—GASP!—radio friendly! Fret not, though, for although much of the mud and vitriol that fueled the Reatards is not readily apparent here, there's enough edge in "It's So Useless" and "All Wasted" to keep those fans who've been around longer than a week on their toes. Sounds like the man's music is starting to get more sophisticated and, in his case, that doesn't mean he's starting that steady slide down into nether reaches of suckdom. The verdict? This is pretty fuckin' good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Goner)

**JEFF WALKER UND DIE FLUFFERS:
Welcome to Carcass Cuntry: CD**

This is one of the guys from goregrind grandfathers Carcass, doing covers of

country songs. It sounds like a stupid idea, I know. I was fully prepared to rip this album a new one when I put it on, but it was surprisingly good. The covers are pretty straight-forward and faithful, with the exception of the distorted guitars (a little unnecessary) and Jeff's surprisingly Shane MacGowan-esque voice. It sounds ridiculous, I know, but it's actually pretty good. It's always nice when a "genre" musician tries something different and pulls it off successfully. Recommended. —Ben Snakepit (Fractured Transmitter)

**JESUS FUCKING CHRIST:
Self-titled: CD**

Is that a punk rock name or what! The name is not the only thing that is good, their music is like the wedgie the jocks would give the nerd kids at school when growing up. Right up the butt crack and it hurts! The music reminds me of early Corrosion Of Conformity, Poison Idea, Battalion Of Saints, and even at times Crucifix. They definitely have a mid '80s sound going for them. Rock and metal overtones played at a mid-tempo to fast pace, but straight up punk rock. The vocals are yelled or screamed but phonetic so that you can understand what is being sung. Their guitars are crunchy and bright, so they sound warm opposed to dirty. Bass is nice and clean but punchy and also warm. The drumming is more than competent with a sound that's reminiscent of early drummers from the So Cal scene. I saw this band a number of months ago. The crusty kids

didn't quite get it. But I think if they gave a few listens to this disc, they will learn that there are other ways to play punk. —Donofthedeath (Inimical)

JOHNS, THE: In Tune: 7" EP

A-side sounds like a cross between any Ramones song C.J. ever sung and "Fight For Your Right" by the Beastie Boys, the latter only tangentially. The first half of the B-side sounds like Orange County's ten-years-too-late answer to the Humpers, who were, for the record, a great band (at least some of the time). Second half of the B-side has a little guitar that reminds me of later Vandals, but, other than that, i'm stumped. You could play me this record, show me the cover, show me pictures of the band, and tell me they were from any year from 1983 or so til the present and i would believe you. BEST SONG: "Wanna Die" BEST SONG TITLE: "Wanna Die" i guess FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The record came with a CD-R of the songs—a practice which, square as it may seem, i strongly endorse. —Rev. Nørð (Anko)

**JONESES, THE:
Tits and Champagne: LP**

I was just talking to my girlfriend, Mor, about this: The Joneses were a good band, but hardly groundbreaking. I mean, if it were the mid '80s and they were playing the Whisky (the Whisky was still a decent venue in the '80s), I'd go; but it's not like missing, say, The Gun Club or something—a band that—along with X to a lesser extent—

really had something cerebral to say and innovative music to get across. And I think The Joneses might agree with me. I'll explain: The Joneses were a trashy band, hopped up on booze and heroin—L.A.'s answer to The Heartbreakers. They fucked a lot of women, had a good time, played their Les Pauls down around their ankles, and then broke up. I think some of them might be in jail right now—at least that's what I've heard. This record, which came out in 1989, must have been something of a godsend to rock fans, considering *nothing* was happening in '89. And, yeah, it's still a nice piece of vinyl, by a bunch of guys who could have been Johnny Thunders stunt doubles. The only problem I have with The Joneses is that the lifestyle they exuded—the Peter Laughner, Lou Reed, Jeffrey Lee Pierce, Johnny Thunders bit—is currently killing some of my friends who buy that shit hook, line, and sinker. Bummer. —Ryan Leach (Full Breach Kicks)

KEVIN K: Polish Blood: CD

There, that's more like it, this is the good glam punk! Starting out in Aunt Helen in 1978 in Buffalo and on through the Lone Cowboys, Road Vultures, and a ton of solo releases, Kevin K never lets me down. So many releases from all over the world... This one is from Poland. Seems to be kind of a collection of tunes from previous releases re-packaged for a Polish release. Twenty songs and not a stinker in the bunch. Kevin K is consistent with his great Ramones meets Thunders

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sound and I can never get enough of it. —Mike Frame (Pasazer)

LIBRARIANS:

Alright Easy Candy Stranger: CD

Four piece Morgantown, West Virginia rockers offer up their first full length for the people. Innovative guitar patterns glide each song down some unknown road. Drums and bass provide a taunt backbeat. The vocals remind me of Peter Murphy with a little more inflection. "Wax Teeth" and "Spend All The Cash" are getting continual play on this one. Forget the over-hyped bands written about on magazines you don't read anymore. Librarians deliver the goods. So check them out and don't plan to return them—no matter what the fee! (After you buy it of course!) —Sean Koepenick (Postfact)

LIFETIME: Somewhere in the Swamps of New Jersey: 2 x CD

I lie to myself about Lifetime. I think I adore them, or that I treasure them. But, in reality, I like them. Granted, they've got songs that are amazing, but I'm starting to think of them as that: a band with some great songs rather than a great band. Maybe it's because they'll never do it for me the way Kid Dynamite does, and I don't have the ability to separate the two in my mind. Here, Jade Tree's collected two discs-worth of material that has mostly already been released. The exceptions are unreleased versions of songs that have already been released. Forty-five tracks in all, but only

twenty-six songs—lots of repetition. And, sadly, the strongest track on this is not an original but the unreleased remix of their cover of Billy Bragg's "New England." That song actually does make it worth it for me (but I doubt I'd buy it for the one track alone). —Megan (Jade Tree)

LOOK BACK AND LAUGH:

Street Terrorism: 7" EP

Tight, angry political hardcore with oodles of hooks. Fuckin' sweet. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

LOS CREEPERS: City Streets: CD

Loctite glue strong street punk, worthy of the long-deserved and recent attention being lavished on the band by Tim Armstrong. —Jessica T (Smelvis)

MAJOR ACCIDENT:

Clockwork Legion: CD

Album number two saw a shortening of their name to "Accident" (as evidenced by the cover art), the infusion of more melody into their sound, and considerably more sophistication in the actual writing of the songs is apparent. Funny, but as I listen to this I can't help but see how reliant on some stereotypical "oi" template so many of the new breed bands are. These guys were obviously influenced by the whole "street punk" thing as much as anybody else, but you'd be hard pressed to find a tune about getting pissed, fighting and blindly waving a flag, let alone a whole album dedicated to those subjects. This isn't some

wistful "things were so much better than" comment, mind you, just an observation that maybe a broadening of horizons and little more thought being put into what's being done now might not be such a bad idea. This? It still fuckin' rocks, of course. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

MANIFESTO JUKEBOX: Strain: CD

What happened? The last record I heard from this band I really liked. But this, this is some tired-ass jangly post-punk with real sassy vocals. Oh god how I despise sassy vocals. I guess you can forgive a little because these guys are from Scandinavia and maybe they don't get that certain enunciations of English come across sounding sassy, but still, what happened? You know how you'll hear a song sometimes and it just sounds like a bunch of intros and transitions and fills with no actual song? Every song on this record sounds like that. Sorry to give this a bad review cause I know these dudes are cool guys and stuff, but hey, sometimes the truth hurts. —Ben Snakepit (Combat Rock)

MARK OF CAIN, THE:

The Unclaimed Prize: CD

This is a reissue of an obscure (well, obscure to me, at least) Australian band's second album, originally released in 1991 and subsequently reissued repeatedly over the ensuing years by a number of different labels. Taking cues from some of post-punk noise rock's heaviest hitters—a little Killing Joke here, a little Big Black

there, a smidge of Foetus' more rambunctious moments, and maybe just a dash of Birthday Party for color—and yet managing to avoid sounding like a trite rehash of all the above, they take the sum of these parts, dress 'em up nice and purty with loud guitars, driving beats and attitude up the wazoo and just let fly some savage, pounding, and strangely catchy tuneage. Seeing as they're still out and about making a racket, one would assume that catching 'em live (as well as investing in a few of their releases) would not be a bad idea. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feel Presents)

MATCHES, THE: Decomposer: CD

I'm sure Epitaph will send someone over to my house to smash a baseball bat through my car windshield, but this will be the second time I will have to send a new record by this label down the toilet. Too many producers' hands in the till make this an uneven sounding affair. Plus the lyrics are truly horrible. And from the liner notes it seems that their manager co-writes the majority of the tunes. Reminds me of when that creepy doctor was writing a lot of Brian Wilson's songs a few years back. These results are similar. I'll be waiting for something new that does not sound like The Fall Out Killers Boys. —Sean Koepenick (Epitaph)

MICHAEL JORDAN TOUCHDOWN

PASS: Cash, Money, Etc.: CD

Gotta say, when I saw the crayoned cover, noticed that MJTP was one of

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those projects where one guy sings and plays all the instruments, and noted that it was co-released on Plan-It-X, I was steeling myself for some shitty folk singer blathering away about anarchism in only the basest and most idealistic, simplistic way. Yet again, that's what I get for judging stuff prematurely, because what I'm hearing is a younger, ragged (though some might say more vulnerable or honest) version of the Weakerthans. I mean, on songs like "Sedan-Sized Truck" and "Ill-Planned, Feeling III," this kid is an absolute dead-ringer for Weakerthans crooner John Samson, even at times using his exact same sense of meter and alliteration. And that's a good thing: this guy's onto something—he's borrowing heavily at times but there's too much passion and focused intent here to call it stealing, you know? Acoustic guitar, keyboards, minimal percussion, layered vocals—the songs are deceptively simple, but there's some incredibly catchy moments on here and the lyrics somehow come across as both cynical and joyous, and all-around razor-smart. Is it punk? Depends on how you look at it, I guess. Is it sincere, memorable, and just pretty much awesome? Yeah, there's definitely that. —Keith Rosson (Plan-It-X)

MILLION DOLLAR MARXISTS:
Do You Wanna Evolve?: 7"

Highly reminiscent of late '90s band All Systems Go, with a touch of the Knockout Pills thrown in (I ain't got internet at my apartment, so who knows, MDM might be older than

both of those bands), the title track has the fantastic line, "Do you wanna walk?/No, I wanna crawl," repeated throughout the chorus. They get all sophisticated with their guitar solos, incorporating a wah-wah pedal (!?!!) and whipping off lots of notes. There's enough of a pop sensibility and the songs are played at a decent enough clip to keep me interested. —Josh Benke (Seeing Eye)

MINCH / BREATHILIZOR: Split: 7"

Minch: Noisecore with the fascination of using a washing machine as instruments. I believe they beat on the side of a washing machine for drums. Almost tribal with all the banging and screaming going on. Somewhere in the mix is a blown out guitar amongst the sheer madness of what sounds like two people singing completely different songs. Fourteen tracks. Breathilizer: Play a more traditional metal that has a raw garage sound on the first track. Song about a space plague that needs to be cured. The second track is more of a bluesy rock number that kind of reminded me of later period Black Flag. The topic has to do something with Pacman. Interesting to say the least. Neither band plays anything remotely pretty, so some dementia is required. —Donofthedeath (My Cheap Ass Life)

MISS DERRINGER: Lullabies: CD

Sympathy For The Record Industry is of those labels that has such consistent quality in their releases I'm pretty much on board with whatever new

stuff they put out. Miss Derringer, thankfully, is no exception to that rule. This album has plenty of the dark, lovelorn, garage rock that I've come to expect from Sympathy releases. Vocalist Liz McGrath has a sassy, heart wrenching voice that rivals her lovely label-mate Holly Golightly. With titles like "Dead Men Weigh More Than Broken Hearts" and "Pennies on His Eyes" this album manages to craft its own darkness into spooky, perfect retro rock songs. Highly recommended for those nights when you may be drowning your sorrows. —Jennifer Whiteford (Sympathy For The Record Industry)

MISSILES / JUPITER SHIFTER:

Missiles vs. Jupiter Shifter: Split 10"

The Missiles start off strong with a couple of punked up, AC/DC-crossed-with-Thee Machine Gun Elephant (minus that bands' guitar virtuosity) sounding tunes. Singer, Takaichi, has a great, Land of the Rising Sun, Bon Scott snarl. "Guitar Yokosuka Thunder" really takes off once it gets to the chorus, and "Three Code Sensor" is memorable for the vocals, which are what I imagine a Japanese guy sounds like when he throws up. The last two songs venture, Icarus-like, a little too close to the brightly burning sun of Nashville Pussy and whichever '80s hair band it was that covered "Once Bitten, Twice Shy," babe. Jupiter Shifter plays standard punk rock, with emphasis on the "rawk." "Wing Store" starts off with a variation on the Spy Hunter riff and

shifts into a slightly slower version of a Stallions song. Not bad. The guitar is way too up front in the mix of the subsequent two songs and you can't really hear the vocals or the drums. The cymbals, however, seem to be crashing continuously. Not good. —Josh Benke (Wood Shampoo)

MORELLO:

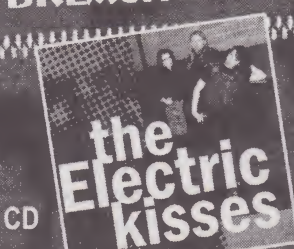
Twelve Ways to Breathe: CD

It's kind of like Jimmy Eat World, but with screaming/yelping and really bad metal guitar breakdowns and less melody. If these songs are the ways to breathe, I'm hoping there are other options because it looks like I'll suffocate otherwise. —Megan (I Scream)

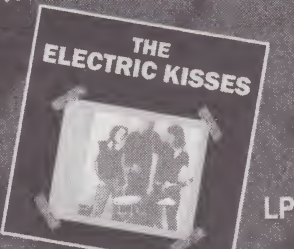
MUCK AND THE MIRES: 1-2-3-4: CD

Remember, if you will, the days when garage rock really meant a bunch of kids in a garage trying their darnedest to sound like the Beatles. Of course they failed in that objective for any number of reasons: poor equipment and lack of a producer the equal of George Martin being the two primary ones. What some of them did manage to achieve, however, was a level of energy and joy the Fab Four lost somewhere in Hamburg before any of our kids in garages ever heard of them. This is what Muck And The Mires do better than any other band I know of. Drawing inspiration not only from The Beatles, but also from all those bands on the Nuggets compilations, these four Boston music scene vets have brought us a real gem of party record here: good time rock'n'roll without

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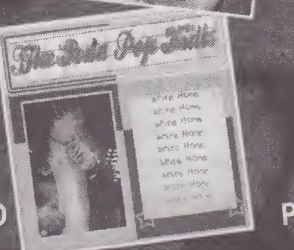


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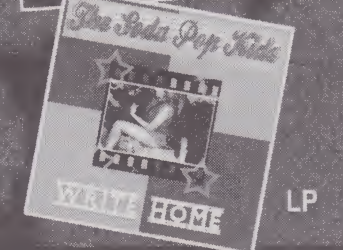


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any self-righteousness or even a hint of any subject matter heavier than boy-meets-girl/girl-dumps-boy. Front man Evan Shore writes three-minute, three-chord songs about love found and love lost as well as anybody, anywhere. This is a good 'un. —Brian Mosher (Dionysus)

NATIONAL RAZOR:

Naked Before God and Country: CD

The charm about this record lies in the fact that it sounds like a decent, fairly young band that's recorded their album in their friend's garage or basement studio. Odd thing is that the band's apparently been together for nearly ten years. It's rough-around-the-edges pop punk stuff with warbly vocals, apparently recorded entirely live with only two mikes and put out by a label that's best known for its blues releases. I liked what I heard, but seventeen songs is a lot for something that isn't totally stellar, and I found my patience growing a bit thin by the end. —Keith Rosson (Mapleshade)

NEON NAZIS / HIPS: Split: 7" EP

Neon Nazis: First tune is kinda drone and boring as far as rock/punk goes, and the second song ain't exactly an improvement. Singer sounds like an indecisive chicken with a head cold. Hips: Considerably artier and weirder than their recordmates, and the pep in their performance puts 'em over the edge. Hips win by a landslide. —Jimmy Alvarado (Going Underground)

NERVE GAS TRAGEDY:

No Tomorrow: CD

Former members of a metalcore act named All Out War start a new band with a new vocalist. This is their second record since the change. I personally only have heard of the previous band's name but not the music. I don't think I would go back and see if I like what they sound like because the current band is pretty bad-ass. I would hate to waste the money if they don't stand up to the current band. Right off the bat, the guitar riffs are heavy and technical in a death metal kind of way with a couple lessons in Iron Maiden guitar licks 101. The double bass drumming is executed with robot-like precision. Vocals are harsh with a smoked pack a day for half my life quality. I would be surprised that this band does not move forward and go onto a bigger indie or even a major. —Donofthead (Spook City)

NERVOUS EXITS: Get Out: CD

Perusing the liner notes, I saw that saxophone is featured on a couple of the tracks. I was hoping it would be the cool kinda sax you hear on records by the Sonics and the Mothballs. It ain't. The guy plays the sax in much the same way Ferris Bueller plays the clarinet—"Never had one lesson!"—honking like dying goose. The guys are all dressed like the Strokes in the liner note pictures, but it seems like they may be trying to ape the Nation Of Ulysees, stylistically and musically, more than anyone else.

As Rick Stratton might have said on long lost-but-not-forgotten sitcom, Silver Spoons: "This is bogus." —Josh Benke (Super Secret)

NO TRUTH LIES: Self-titled: CD

I've never been much for religion, but No Truth Lies is my salvation. I have a serious lyrical problem. I get songs stuck in my head for hours, sometimes days. I don't even have to hear the song. I could be at breakfast and someone's struggling with the ketchup. As soon as people start suggesting where the bottle should be hit for maximum ketchup compliance, I'll get Young Black Teenagers' "Tap the Bottle" stuck in my head. It's there now, just from typing it. This happens at least fifteen times daily. But, I am now armed with No Truth Lies. They somehow have the ability to unstuck any song lodged in my head. I don't know how they do it, but I am grateful. They've got the feel of Tim Version (think the split with Superchinchilla rescue mission and not the country stuff—which I also love), but their sound is definitely their own. One of the bands I'm most excited about out of Florida right now. —Megan (A.D.D.)

NOMEANSNO:

All Roads Lead to Ausfahrt: CD

Nomeansno means no desire to listen to this record a second time. BEST SONG: "Mondo Nihilissimo 2000" BEST SONG TITLE: "Mondo Nihilissimo 2000" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: It is

probably quite apparent that I was reading the *Roctober* record reviews on the toilet today. —Rev. Nørb (Ant Acid)

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Oh man, this is all over the place. Here's a partial list of the bases they touch: electro-folk, drum machine hymnal, rap, art, and indie rock. It's not without its brief charms, but the splattering of the influences just coggles me. In their approach, they remind me of the Mean Reds—mostly interested in the blender, or "making something new," not the ingredients being chucked into the blender. I just don't hear enough internal digestion (collage isn't just ripping something out, it's putting it back in a new context is where the art is) or self-identity (which is ironic, since they're trying so hard to be different). So, if you want a single band sounding like a regional comp of truly unlike music (including a barely recognizable Who cover), then Order fits that request. —Todd (Blood On The Drash)

OUT WITH A BANG:

I'm Against It EP: 12"

When Albert Hofmann, the Swiss chemist who first synthesized LSD, accidentally got a taste of a very minute amount of the just-born industrial strength mind bender back in 1943, he had a helluva time just figuring out how to work the pedals on his bicycle so he could get home that night—so powerful was the drug. That's how I feel right now with Out



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With A Bang. I'm not sure I know how to brush my ass or wipe my teeth, let alone craft some smarmy review about this one-sided twelve-incher from punk rock heaven. Out With A Bang, for those trying to keep track of the evolution of lo-fi misanthrope-core, is the band that has grown up from the wreckage of the backed-up toilet explosion once known as "The Grabbies." And the Grabbies, of course, were a band that could best be compared to a short bus full of Tourette's Syndrome Italian retards stalled out over a giant anthill crawling with stinging ants and in their brief existence they produced two 7" records that were the very picture of brutal, hate-filled, dim-witted beauty. *Live Raw Punk Shits*, in fact, was so blastically raw that it makes the Reatards sound like the Max Weinberg 7 and I would still put that record on the top of my Razorcake Top 5 list each issue if I thought I could get away with it. The Grabbies were "punk as hate" and I loved everything about it. So deep was my affection for that amazing band that I made, up counterfeit Grabbies shirts—one for myself and one for the only other person I knew who gave two shits about the Grabbies: a friend of mine known as "The Imp." If it weren't for those shirts I made, I might not know Out With A Bang even existed right now. But as luck would have it, the Imp wound up wearing her counterfeit Grabbies shirt in a photo which she posted on Fox Entertainment

Group Inc.'s "MySpace"—a sort of meet-n-greet web-club popular with attention-starved teenagers, pedophiles and wannabe rock stars. And, lo and behold, what should bubble up from the cyber sea of MySpace chitchat and go for the bait? None other than Anus, the surly snapping turtle frontman of the Grabbies. He claimed that he was just wondering why anyone in their right mind would make shirts emblazoned with the logo of such a ridiculously "horseshit" band as the Grabbies. Or maybe it was really just the predatory congressman side of him coming out. Whatever it was that drew this foul-mouthed idiot savant out from his internet duck blind is anyone's guess. What's important is that he brought news of his new band, Out With A Bang, and that was just the thing to pull me out of the doldrums of a deep musical despondency that had gripped me since the untimely demise of my beloved Grabbies. So things are right with the world now; Out With A Bang might be a tad more cohesive than the Grabbies ever were—perhaps Anus has a Ritalin prescription now?—but there's more than enough unbridled hostility and seething hate-stew here for me to hang my hat on. And that's saying something, because I've got a huge head. Plus they've thrown some *Three Stooges* sound bytes between songs, which always brings the I.Q. level of anything down a few glorious notches. And nothing goes better with lo-fi than lo-brow. My only complaint is that one side of a

record's-worth of this kind of stuff just isn't enough. But if I know Anus, I know there's sure to be more where this came from. Hate springs eternal, after all. —Aphid Peewit (Proud to be Idiot, www.ptbi.8m.com)

PARKWAY DRIVE:
***Killing with a Smile:* CD**

Musically imitating Metallica, but the singer's voice seems strained and unaccustomed to his self-imposed and unnatural screaming. Technically sublime melodic metalcore; comparable to System Of A Down and their ilk. —Jessica T (Epitaph)

PARKWAY WRETCH: *Homesick:* CD

Politically charged poetry set to emotional yet gritty punk rock reminiscent of Crimpshrine's "Sleep, What's That?" EP. Not bad at all! —Mr. Z (Formula Thirteen)

PERE UBU: *Why I Hate Women:* CD

Why I Hate Pere Ubu would be a more accurate title. One assumes this was released in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the band's one good song. BEST SONG: Well, duh, "Final Solution" BEST SONG TITLE: "Two Girls (One Bar)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I've never actually read that book. Is it any good? —Rev. Nørb (Smog Veil)

PIGS, THE: *Oink!:* CD

...when i first saw that this was on a label called "Disturbing Music," i immediately assumed that that meant "Disturbing Records"—house organ


of Chicago's The Cunts (occasionally "The C*nts") for like the last twenty years or so—and that the Pigs were some manner of post-Cunt or perhaps merely Cunt-affiliated project, which had me contemplating their competent yet unincisive Oingo Boingo/Skafishisms in an entirely different manner than i was forced to contemplate them in once i found out Disturbing Records and Disturbing Music are two wholly unrelated entities. In this case, i can only ask the listener to compare Oingo Boingo's *Only a Lad* to the wholly unoriginal by comparison (yet still, musically, in the same ballpark) *Stand Back*, then ask thyself if thee thinketh that Geoff Westen of The Pigs will ever be writing the score for *Batman* movies like Danny Elfman of Oingo Boingo. One thinketh not. Decent record though. BEST SONG: "Saturday Night," because it doesn't sound like Oingo Boingo OR Skafish, it sounds like the Kings! *The Kings are Here, binch!* BEST SONG TITLE: "Saturday Night," because it sounds like the Bay City Rollers! *The Bay City Rollers are Here, binch!* FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Danny Elfman sucks, and don't those keyboards at the beginning of "Saturday Night" sound frighteningly like those of REO Speedwagon's "Ridin' The Storm Out"??? —Rev. Nørb (Disturbing Music)


PRETTY BOY THORSON & THE FALLEN ANGELS: *Self-titled:* CD

What a difference recording can make. I reviewed their 7" in the last

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issue and thought it was decent, but felt that there was something missing. I can't say the same for this full-length. There's so much more energy and so much more passion. Maybe it was lost in the fuzz on the 7", but the three songs that are on both releases (especially "Things I Should Have Told You Before" and "Two Step across Two Harbors") sound almost like a new song was created between the two recordings. They remind of me a bit of Shakey Bones, where there is a strong tie to roots music, but there's way too much punch and energy to call it folk. (Plus it wouldn't do either band justice to make pigeonhole them like that.) At times, reminiscent of Cranford Nix's gloomy outlook and voice. At other times, they sound like they'd be right at home on a show with any of the Tampa/A.D.D. bands. This, on repeat, has been my commute soundtrack for two weeks straight. I just can't take it out of my CD player. Fantastic. —Megan (Ragged But Right / Redemption Value)

RESISTANCE 77:

***Songs for a Nanny State:* CD**

Another strong album from these guys, with tons of poppy punk stuff that would make Cocksparrer fans giddy and even a couple of speedier tunes this time out. Although at one point they sing "keep your petty politics away from me," they aren't afraid to tackle serious subjects, like the degradation of their neighborhoods (saying that "We need to lock the parents up/if they don't know how

to raise their kids") and the ulterior motives of celebrities who put on benefits for the world's poor. All in all an interesting, strong release. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

RETCHING RED:

***Scarlet Whore of War:* CD**

I must admit, I get a huge charge out of hearing a super-fast, aggressive punk rock band fronted by a female vocalist screaming unapologetically about her bloody womb. Vocalist Cinder Block is the best thing about this solid, politically charged collection of music. Her scratchy sing/screaming makes me want to see this band live, like, *right now*. And even though I'm not an American, I totally appreciated the frustration and anger present in songs like "Blue Kid Trapped in a Red State." This is the kind of CD that requires a lot of jumping around the room. I did it. You will too. —Jennifer Whiteford (Rodent Popsicle)

RIBZY: 81-85 Recordings: CD

Ribzy was one of those bands in the '80s that everyone knew about but never really had much of anything by them—or at least that was the case with everyone I knew. I think with the exception of a tune on some faceless homemade comp culled from tracks lifted from some long-ago punk radio show and their sole track on MRR's legendary *Not So Quiet on the Western Front* compilation I hadn't heard another note from them until putting this puppy on the player. In short, this was a treat. Starting off as a sloppy,

scrappy hardcore band with oodles of charm, they apparently progressed over the course of their career (and this disc) into a fine hardcore band more prone to mid-tempo ranting than balls-to-the-wall thrashing, although they were more than capable of that when the need arose, before calling it quits in 1985. The recordings here are all studio takes, and there's even a track recorded by a lineup in 2004. Pick of the litter? An almost surreal interpretation of the Archies' "Sugar Sugar." Good to see these kids get their due. —Jimmy Alvarado (Vinehll)

RIOT SQUAD: *No Potential Threat:* CD

Riot Squad were one of the lesser known "UK82" bands, lasting only the first half of the 1980s. In those few years, however, they managed to release a number of seven-inchers and one posthumous LP, *No Potential Threat*, of which this is a reissue, complete with numerous tracks from the aforementioned singles seven-inchers and a couple of demo cuts. Musically they come off as a mélange of Discharge, Blitz and, especially "Troops of Tomorrow" era Exploited, thanks on no small part to their singer sounding like a helluva lot like Wattie. Brusque, primal and political, these guys may not have been brimming with technical prowess (then again, how many of the truly great hardcore bands really were?), but they got their point across quite well. Good stuff. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

RIVER CITY TANLINES:

***I'm Your Negative:* CD**

Smoke after the fireworks; hanging in the air like a specter. That's what this album sounds like: smoke in your clothes, eyes burning, lingering notes drifting through the air, slow to dissipate. And although it doesn't come right out and scream all the way through like the quiver of released and previously collected singles, the result's remarkable. It's a slow-burning smolder that shows age as maturity, which, when it does explode, is all the more powerful (think of the tension of the burning fuse). Joan Jett's not dead, but Alicja Trout is my generation's Joan Jett: an undeniable talent driving a force behind whatever marketing ploy could theoretically be foisted upon her. At the core, she's a consummate, passionate musician. This is music for mature rockers who don't devalue youth nor fake their age and it's for fans of bands as widely scattered as the Bashtoles, Top Ten, Big Star, Mouserocket, Roky Erickson, and, well, great rock music. —Todd (Dirtnap)

ROYAL PAINS, THE:

Get Punched: 7" EP

Part A Lines: Frenzied, helium squirrel female vocals (which are rad.) Part nail hammered into the trachea, growling male vocals ala Whiskey Sunday. Part Billy Childish: his fingerprints are all over this 7", and beyond the fact that he produced and mixed it, The Royal Pains' celebrate musical amateurism and worn kneecap music well-loved

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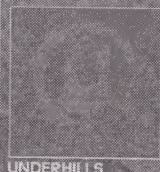
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by Mr. Childish. Part Triggers: Rotted-out-fillings, lead-in-the-blood stream meanness and "Is it a party? Okay, I'll piss my pants" feel. Their full powderkegosity culminates on the final song, "Eye on You," which has become my favorite track, by mixing the cocktail perfectly. Excellent. —Todd (Jonnycat)

RUM RUNNER: *Guns at Cyrano's*: CD

Fans of The Pogues, please form a line behind me. Today we are here to meet Rum Runner, the pride of Albert, British Columbia. Four young men from western Canada who know how to bash their way through a fine collection of Irish-inflected punk rock songs about guns and gin and sweethearts and going home. The drummer sounds like he's trying to destroy his kit, the singer sounds like he's long since destroyed his vocal chords, and the guitars do their best to keep up. It could be a total disaster; in fact, it often sounds like things are just about to go completely out of control. But somehow they never quite do. Listening to *Guns at Cyrano's* is kind of like riding a roller coaster with just a bit of a whiskey buzz, sharing shots from the flask of a smelly little guy with no front teeth who tells the best stories since my Uncle Bill. I don't exactly what that means, but I know I like this record a whole bunch. —Brian Mosher (Stumble)

RUSS SUBSTANCE:

The Safest Place to Hide a Book: CD

This little album is totally adorable. Billy Bragg comparisons are

inevitable, given the British-man-with-discernable-accent-and-acoustic-political-songs thing that Russ Substance has going on. I like that this has a little zine-ish insert with the lyrics. I love the first track, "Kings and Queens," because it is so earnest and hopeful and you can hear him clearing his throat before he starts to sing. Most of the songs on this album are charming and catchy in a sweet, acoustic punk kind of way. I'm all over it. —Jennifer Whiteford (At the Library)

SAMIAM:

Whatever's Got You Down: CD

I wish this record was the JFK assassination. Because everyone would remember where they were when they first heard about it. I wish this record was the Zapruder film. Because we'd spend the next forty-plus years analyzing it. More than anything I hope Samiam will finally get their due. Whatever that "due" might be. Be it a million copies sold or recognition outside the legion of snotty ass old timers claiming they used to be better and some snotty ass youngsters claiming their new record should be as big if not bigger than a presidential assassination. Samiam has been away from a studio for over five years and they come out with a new record this year like they've spent the time fine-tuning their game. That and playing no fucking shows in the U.S. but touring plenty in Europe and South America. If you liked their last record *Astray*, you're a true gentelperson of distinction and you

shan't be disappointed. If you didn't like *Astray*, you're a no class fucking tool. —Steve (Hopeless)

SCREAMING FEMALES:

Baby Teeth: CD

Kind of a weird record, and not just because it's a CD and there's only one female and practically no screaming: starts off with this heavy groovy Kyuss thing, and then generally avoids that neighborhood for the rest of the time, sticking mostly to a sparse pop deal with tasteful bits of funk here and there and some very competent guitar work (though with too much soloing for my taste) by the female who also is the singer. And while the music doesn't sound much like the Yes Yes Yesses, the vocals do sound a lot like those of Karen O, maybe doing a Dylan impression. Totally grew on me, just like hairs. —Cuss Baxter

SHAKES, THE: *The Rise and Fall of Modern Living*: CD

I loved The Shakes last release, with its lighthearted, bouncy pop delivered with sincerity to rival Jonathan Richman. And, in general, I hate when a band goes from themes like changing the world with songs about girls to more "serious" topics. And I almost always hate concept albums. But guess what? Peter Gilabert is such a good songwriter, and the band does such a brilliant job of melding the more intellectual side of The Kinks with the more innocent side of The Modern Lovers, that you can't help but love every moment of *The Rise*

and *Fall of Modern Living*. One of my favorite bands right now. —Brian Mosher (Teenacide)

SHOCK NAGASAKI:

Year Of the Spy: CD

This album is great all around, from the production, style, lyrics, originality, and catchiness. A good word for this album is raw. The album starts off strong with "1968" which follows with "I Get High on Low Society." Many of the songs discuss capitalism, having an affinity for the lower classes, and an ever present questioning of politics and religious propaganda in the U.S. It's abstract while still making a point without being preachy. I love track ten, "Hit the Beach." The simplicity of the guitar riff is so intoxicating. It lodges itself in my brain and hits repeat. The vocals and sound are some freak baby accident birth between the U.S. Bombs, Johnny Thunders, and The Clash. It's a fun listen, what else can you ask for? —Jenny Moncayo (TKO)

SHOOK ONES:

Facetious Folly Feat: CD

New full length from a self-professed "Lifetime rip-off band" (see *Verbicide* #17). I could just leave that as the review, but I'd feel bad. So... I bought my first Lifetime record, *Hello, Bastards*, sometime in the late '90s. As blasphemous as it'll sound, I didn't really care for it at the time: there was something too... warm about it. They were blending these really tight tempo and chord changes with a certain...

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bounciness (God, my adjectives are blowing today); it initially came across as a bit too imprecise, almost sloppy—I appreciated the verse-chorus-verse aspect of punk back then, and Lifetime discarded that to some degree. They weren't *actually* sloppy, not by any means, but they were altering the template, expanding on it, and that threw me. Jump forward nearly ten years and there's a glut of bands tilling their ground. I really can't tell you how many reviews I've read recently in which bands are getting compared to Lifetime now. With all that in mind, I'm not going to say that Shook Ones are a straight up Lifetime rip-off, but the similarities are definitely, absolutely there. Difference is that I actually appreciate that warm "bag full of rocks and Jello" aspect of Lifetime now, and the Shook Ones sound like the more precise, straight-forward version of the band I was looking for back then. So that's it, in a nutshell—super-similar to Lifetime, if that band concentrated more vigorously on the sharp angles and taut edges in their songs. —Keith Rosson (Revelation)

SHOP FRONTS: *So Sick: 7"*

I gotta give a heartfelt apology to the bands that sent releases to *Razorcake* and were unfortunate enough to have them passed on to me. Personal blahblahs got in the way of my review duties and I'm just now working through the backlog of records and CDs piled up on my floor. Nowhere is this better illustrated than

in this review—the "So Sick" 7" came out nearly a year ago. This release is everything a 7" should be—short, punchy songs that are catchy as hell, rudimentary guitar leads, vocals dripping with attitude and cover photos courtesy of Canderson. The one sheet says there's a full length coming out on Rip Off Records. Sounds to me like the perfect match. —Josh Benke (NoMa Beach)

SIEGE: *Drop Dead: CD*

Although I would argue the point that these guys are the originators of "grindcore"—sorry, but Deep Wound predates 'em by at least a year—I will concede that they definitely had the largest worldwide influence, thanks in no small part to their inclusion on Pushead's *Cleanse the Bacteria* comp and their earlier *Drop Dead* demo. As evidenced by this nine-song, seventeen-minute "discography" of nearly everything the band released (only one other song by a later lineup is apparently out there), the reverence they've been afforded by bands like Infest, Drop Dead and, yes, Napalm Death is well-deserved, as they were one motherfucker of a band, indeed. Eight of the tracks whiz by like a Mack truck lobbed at your noggin by a very pissed off Superman, delivered at breakneck velocity, this was a harbinger of the deluge of a legion of less talented bands that followed in their wake. Although many have upped the speed quotient, only a paltry few have managed to come close to matching Siege's sheer muscle. Plop

it on and be amazed, kid. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

SINKING SHIPS: *Disconnecting: CD*

Fast, straight edge hardcore from this Seattle band. This is a little bit better lyrically and vocally than most bands that play this style, but you definitely know what you're getting. Fans of Kid Dynamite, Champion, or the Bridge 9 roster would do well to check this band out. —Mike Frame (Revelation)

SNEAKY PINKS: *I Can't Wait: 7" EP*

...these guys sent me their first 45 a while ago, and, while i distinctly remember that it had a picture of Little Richard on the sleeve and came wrapped in tinfoil, i could not, after significant toil, account for the whereabouts of the item when questioned. Following a live performance that was, by my recollection, both vaguely amusing and mercifully brief (about ten minutes of a nude guy shoving a White Flag reject lookin' dude if memory holds), i wound up with a copy of the second 45, under strict orders from a formerly nude gentleman not to lose it without listening to it as with the first one. I can say with some assurance that i was not expecting much from the record. I was in ERROR! In ERROR I SAY!!! The a-side, "I Can't Wait," is a THING of SHEEREST GENIUS!!! A low-fi—hell, *no-fi*—ode to underage ugly-bumpin' that reminds the listener what the fuck the big deal was about those Radio X/Super Teem era Brentwoods/Donnas/

Bobbyteens 45s, anyway, melding that whole mid-'90s SuperCatcher Darin Ravioli aesthetic with that "sensitive but horny" Buddy Holly via the Ramones crunch of M.O.T.O. "Everybody says that you're too young/Everybody says that I'm too dumb/Come on little girl let's have some fun/Oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah!" Well RIGHT THE FUCK ON, formerly naked dude! "Eighteen years is a long long time" indeed! B-side is three more bursts of jeenyus, including the immortal couplet "I wanna blowjob/I wanna hot dog." Strange as this may sound, this might be the best 7" 45 with one song on the A-side and three songs on the B-side since "Nervous Breakdown," unless i forgot about something. *Oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah oh yeah!* BEST SONG: "I Can't Wait" BEST SONG TITLE: "Life Stupid I Stupid" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The plain pink labels are not actually plain pink paper; they are a tint screen of magenta on white stock. Also, i still don't know the name of that Goner Records font. —Rev. Nørb (Rubber Vomit)

SNITCHES GET STITCHES: *Even a Butchered Carcass Can Shine: CD*

Angry, angular metal with lots of speed, precision and complicated time changes. The first couple songs remind me of Poland's Antigama, brutal, fast, and thrashing about. Things slow down a bit for "Mom and Me at the Zoo," but it's no less punishing than the faster



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numbers. Sounds like Helmet and Satan might be influences. I'm only halfway through the disc and already I'm exhausted. Aspiring serial killers, you've found your soundtrack. —Josh Benke (Empty)

SOBRIETY STARTS TOMORROW:
In the Key of Whiskey: CD-R

They've aptly written their review for me. In "This Song Is Definitely Not About Vampires," they have the lyric, "my songs are poor excuses for all the music I adore." Against Me! is a pretty safe guess for one of the bands they adore. Although SST is a lot faster, there's a definite resemblance to their statemates there (This is also recorded by Rob McGregor, who has recorded AM!). There's nothing bad about this in and of itself, but it leaves me wondering what they'll be like once they develop their own sound that isn't derivative of those who they admire. I'll look for it. —Megan (self-released)

SONNY VINCENT: P.I.N.S.: 2 x CD

If this album was a Ramone, it would be Daniel Rey. BEST SONG: "Bad Attitude" BEST SONG TITLE: "Drug Binge" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: 3-D cover art (including boobies!) by the late Mad Marc Rude! —Rev. Norb (NDN)

STATE RUN: Paralysis: 7"

All too often in punkland (or at least the dark and sordid world of punk reviews), words like "gritty" and "raw" are just synonyms for "Man, this recording sounds like shit." State Run

actually makes that grittiness work for them—the dirty recording serves them perfectly. Jagged, bright guitar riffs serve as the launching pad, drums that sound like someone's pissed off and punching through cardboard keep everything tethered to the ground, and the result is something that's wholly tense and nerve-wracking. And I mean that as a compliment. It's like a mixture of Yage or some other long-lost '90s Ebullition band and groups like Science Of Yabra's heavy, weird, wall-like riffs that carry the whole song along. I admire bands that don't go for the easy plays, the obvious chord progressions or song structures. Bands that delve a little bit deeper and come up with something, like State Run has, that's serrated and mean and smart, that keeps the listener stuck in this place that's somewhere between wanting to tap your foot and wanting to just geek out to its anxiousness and this sense of creeping apprehension. So, yeah, *Paralysis* is gritty and raw as all get out, utilizing the terms "edgy" and "nervous" to the fullest. A fine record. —Keith Rosson (Rat Patrol)

STEINWAYS, THE:
Missed the Boat: CD

East coast pop-punk group who befriends the likes of the Ergs and the Unloveables (in fact one of the songs has a bridge that is a nod and a wink to the Unloveables' "Feel in all Emo Since I Broke Up With You" song. Only the lyrics here go: Feel in all emo since I ran out of weed! Hahahahaha....uhm, okay, maybe

you had to be there). Think *Wiggler* era Screeching Weasel. Oh they also have a super duper cute gal on bass and a Middle Eastern lookin' gent on guitar. Nice. —Mr. Z (Cold Feet)

STITCHES, THE: 8 X 12: CD

I feel like I run into a lot of Stitches records in the \$5 sale bins of record stores. Fast, catchy stuff with kind of dumb lyrics, beer bottles breaking, and songs that are under two minutes. So, you know, fun. The Pogues song "This Womans Got Me Drinking" is probably the highlight. —Comrade Bree (Vinyl Dog)

STRAIGHT TO HELL:
'02-'04 Discography: CD

Goddamn, one shudders to imagine the plethora of slayed dragons and razed villages that must've fallen prey to this band in their short two-year existence. I'm getting that from the cover, which features an army of soldiers coming out of a large dragon-headed ship, being led by a guy with a He-Manesque breastplate and a dog's head. It's really no big shocker that Gloom released this: Straight To Hell's playing straight-up thrash, with throat-rending vocals and the occasional screeching metal solo thrown in. The bad: I guess I really shouldn't review thrash shit anymore; all of these bands just start to blend together after awhile. The good: Smart, scene-critical lyrics in a genre that almost always goes for the dumbass A-B-A-B rhyme scheme. —Keith Rosson (Gloom)

STREETSIDE PROPHETS:
Talking to Walls: CD

These high school kids have got to stop being influenced by emo sooner or later. —Mr. Z (Formula Thirteen)

STRESSFACE:
Oh, You're Welcome: CD

This is a project band comprised of almost the entire staff of No Idea Records, which is funny because the CD isn't on No Idea. Judging from the lyrics, you'd think running a record label is nothing but dealing with UPS. I mean, I'm sure they deal with UPS a lot, but damn, how about some songs about something else? Where are the songs about paying royalties to bands? Sending promo posters out on the road for tours? Stuffing records in plastic sleeves? I know these dudes do more than joke around with the UPS guy. Musically, it's pretty decent hardcore; they really play up the sleeveless shirt and bullet belt thing, but they actually sound a bit tamer than most other bands that imagery brings to mind. Still, this is a fun album well worth the listen. —Ben Snakepit (Plan-It-X)

STRIKE ANYWHERE: Dead FM: CD

There's a deep poetics, undeniable humanity, and romance-distilled rebellion that rages through Strike Anywhere like a river breaking its banks. At the heart of the matter aren't empty words (fuck me, fuck you, fuck the world, fuck pigs), but compassion, frustration, and personal fight. The music itself follows suit—meticulous aural oaths—that are played with such

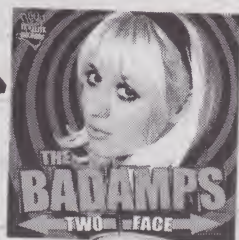
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twining force to the vocals that you can almost imagine buildings rattling and politicians flinching when the record's cranked. The fuel that sets them apart? Thomas pulls in his own heritage—family (his grandfather was a welder in the Manhattan Project), hometown (Richmond, VA), history (slave docks and Civil War)—and makes grand statements that are tempered in the highly personal. And not to speak ill of Anti-Flag, but unlike them, Strike Anywhere doesn't target their songs to thirteen-year-olds and aren't smart guys dumbing the politics down to the lowest common denominator. (I couldn't help wince when watching Anti-Flag and, during the crowd participation part of the set, applauded that raising a fist during their song was "unity.") On the contrary, Strike Anywhere has taken the upside-down banner of the disenfranchised, the stark courage to not merely repeat previous records, sing smartly about it, and—I'm having a hard time saying this for a punk band—wrap it all up with an amazing ballad. —Todd (Fat)

SUBB: *The Motions*: CD

Between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, a day didn't go by that I didn't listen to ska of some wave or another. My record collection ran the gamut of it's thirty-plus year history. This was also the brief time when I enjoyed dancing and actually had a ferocious skank. And I don't mean some monkey mosh dance done by punk kids. I fancied myself an extra in the movie

Dance Craze or something. At any rate, during the mid-'90s there was actually some really good new ska being made. The Moon Records logo was a guaranteed seal of quality. At some point things started to rapidly decline. Moon started signing any and every band who remotely played anything resembling ska. Most of those bands were made up of people my age and a little older playing ska-punk at speeds my chubby little legs couldn't dance to and everything started to sound as derivative as people had been saying it was the whole time. Jesus is this my autobiography or a review? I guess the point is, I realize now that bands like Subb and the ones who turned me off to new ska are what happens when the copier is running out of toner and you make a copy of a copy of a copy and the copy you just made has no connection to the roots of the music. Because I love bringing this up, I'll also say it's like those hoodie/flannel combos that were in Mervyns in the early '90s because "grunge" was popular. It looks basically like the original but it's a complete misunderstanding of the original intent and aesthetic. The only upshot here is the political leanings that from time to time break up the trite songs about girls and "dancing 'til the break of day." —Stevo (Stomp)

SUBHUMANS:

New Dark Age Parade: CD

Before all you anglophiles and hippie-punks get all hot 'n' bothered, this isn't the latest from Dick, Trotsky and

the boys, but rather the new release by the legendary, recently reformed *Canadian* Subhumans, a late '70s/early '80s punk group that hailed from the same town as fellow-legends DOA, and even shared at least a couple of members with that group. Three-fourths of the original lineup—Wimpy Roy, Mike Graham and Gerry Useless (the latter once a punk rock poster boy as one of the "Vancouver 5," who were convicted for a number of activist-oriented bombings in the '80s)—make the scene here, cranking out fourteen tracks of politically astute punk rock that wantonly skewers all the relevant topics of the day: macho shithheads, American foreign policy, religion, the cult of celebrity, class disparity, capitalism and public's acquiescence of all of it. The tempos may have slowed a bit, there isn't an immediate anthem like "Fuck You," "Big Picture" or "Slave to My Dick" and there's a bit of "rock" around the edges of a couple of songs, but on the whole this stands up quite nicely against their previous albums *No Wishes*, *No Prayers* and *Incorrect Thoughts*, and at worst is consistently above-average, which is more than DOA has been able to say in at least twenty years (mind you, I say this as a huge DOA fan who remains optimistic that Joey will soon find enough inspiration in the current global dysfunction to write and record a full album's worth of visceral, mind-bogglingly good music that'll reinvigorate my faith and whop me upside the head for ever doubting him).

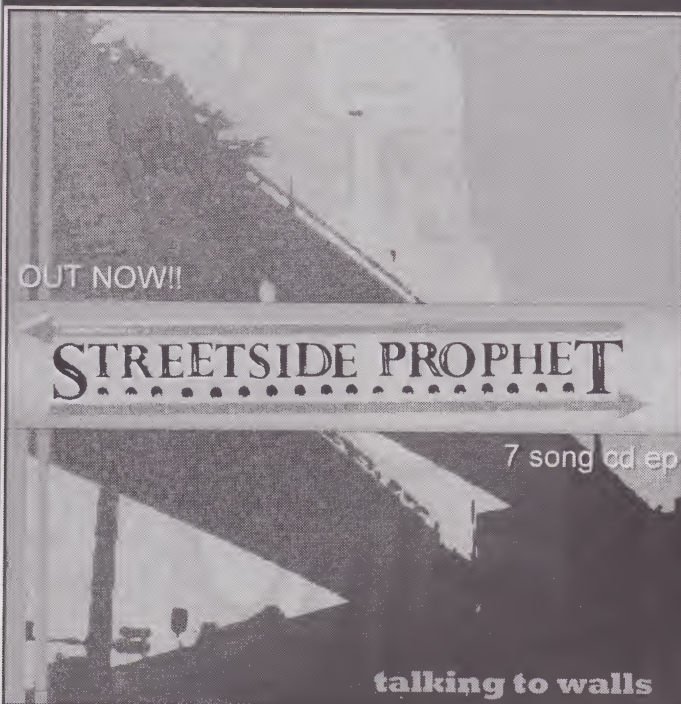
As someone who loved this band way back when, it's not only nice to see them out and about again, it's fuggin' faboo to have 'em making a racket that actually adds to, rather than detracts from, their lofty status as one of the greatest North American punk bands ever to grace a stage. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

SUPER BLACK MARKET:

Will Sell Anything: CD

This one was hard to pin down at first—I mean, I was into it from first listen but couldn't quite define *why* I dug it; there's a slickness and complexity to it that would immediately turn a lot of purists off. Super Black Market's drawing heavily from bands like Refused (in the moments where they go from stop on a dime hardcore shit, with strained, blood-gargling vocals, to quiet, verging-on-pretty musical interludes and actual, like, singing) and Jets Vs. Sharks (they're writing songs that are managing to come across catchy as all get out, *mercilessly* catchy, but also filled with totally fucked time signatures and weird, discordant parts, without sounding like they're reading the Cliff Notes to the Discordant Emo Band Handbook) and totally coming up with their own definitive sound. There's such a danger in music like this, especially in the vocals, that are clear and discernable almost all of the time, of sounding a tad bit too radio-friendly. *Will Sell Anything* avoids that ugly pitfall with the fact that,

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despite its inherent toe-tapability, there's something that's just a touch creepy and dark about it, possibly in spite of the band's intentions. Nearly every song has one or more of those moments where you just go, "Shit, that part rips", and there's an earnestness to the vocals, genuineness, that bands rarely seem to pull off. And they're tackling some heavy stuff lyrically, with a certain amount of grace and guardedness, without coming across like you're reading a text collage-poem or some kid's acid-addled journal entry. Overall, it's a complex and innately modern sounding punk record, one that thankfully comes just a touch short of being *too* slick and polished for its own good. Instead, it winds up being a record with the occasional honest-to-shit guitar solo that I can not only stand, but actually really, really like. —Keith Rosson (Minnow)

TAKE MY CHANCES:

Down Here With Us: CD

These guys just come slamming out of the gate with the first song and don't quit. It's some competent hardcore stuff with a vocalist that, when he's not screaming himself bloody, sounds like he's belting out forgotten tunes from a *Hello, Bastards*-era recording session. Actually, when I'm doing something else and not really focusing on *Down Here With Us*, not actively listening to it, the whole thing really starts to take on the definite flavor and punch of a Lifetime record. When the focus returns, I start to note differences between the two—Take My Chances

are melodic, yeah, but the melody's buried. They're more focused on getting in there, playing the song and getting the fuck out. So I guess I'd say it sounds a lot like Lifetime filtered through a standard hardcore colander, with a touch of thrash thrown in the mix. The layout for this thing's absolutely gorgeous (though I've got a sinking feeling it's not being offered on vinyl) and there's a few hidden tracks that consist of Misfits and Black Flag covers. Definitely a decent outing. —Keith Rosson (One Day Savior)

THAT WAS THEN: *Troublemakers*: CD

Would an '80s Victory Records comparison be accurate? Quite possibly. The cover's got a bunch of people clutching each other in the pit, everyone's either groping one another or, like, possibly so lit up in this incredible moment of kinship that they all just had to sing the next chorus together. Thank God the camera was there to capture such a candid moment. Given the cover and the title of the record, I was mentally steeling myself for some thickneck, tough guy brocore (*Brocore*: Subgenre of "hardcore" punk rock, with a lyrical focus on: friendship, crews, never giving up, getting back at those who have stabbed one in the back, staying true to something, watching one another's back—presumably so it won't get stabbed—etc., etc.). Thankfully, That Was Then steer way clear of that whole shtick by actually being pretty positive, or at least avoiding a lot of macho posturing, something that I totally

associate with music like this. There's isn't a single threat to "get" somebody on this record, a breath of fresh air in a genre that oftentimes relies a fuck of a lot on antagonism and gang mentality. That Was Then pull out the expected stops here: tempo changes, group vocals, muted guitar riffs, fast breakdowns, all of it. It's not the freshest or most groundbreaking record to come out, musically speaking, but they certainly know what they're doing, and they get some points for not taking the easy road lyrically—shit, they're tackling the death of a parent, the need to not marginalize women in hardcore, and pulling Malcolm X sound bites in the last song. It's not the kind of music that moves me that often, but these guys deserve credit for tackling topics that don't often get discussed, and doing it in a way that's smart as hell and inclusive. Nice work, guys. —Keith Rosson (Armada In Flames)

THAT'S HIM! THAT'S THE GUY!:

Help Me, I'm on Fire: CDEP

If Procol Harum started an acoustic new folk band and let the star of a children's programming show be the singer, you'd have TH!TTG!, and you'd have me reaching for the stop button. —Megan (Jumberlack)

THIS IS MY FIST!:

A History of Rats: CD

This is the first and apparently only full length from TIMF! The sweetness that could be heard in Annie's voice on earlier releases has been replaced with whiskey and gravel. This bothered

me at first because it was such a stark difference from the songs on the 7" and compilations. Her voice grew on me the more I listened; these songs and their subjects should be heard through whiskey and gravel. As a group they beat the shit out of their instruments to my grinning satisfaction. When the realization that I will probably never get to see them again sinks in, my pint glass won't just hold beer but also my tears. Last time I saw them live we were really drunk and singing along and Annie asked, "Who yells 'hooray' anymore?" When listening to TIMF!, this guy right here. —Chris Devlin (No Idea)

THOR:

Devestation of Musculation: CD

You know what? If you don't have a drummer, then you don't have a band, and, therefore, you shouldn't record an album. Yeah, I know John Miki Thor is real old-school and I've seen *Rock N Roll Nightmare* and all that, but that doesn't change the fact that this album is tired, uninspired metal, recorded with a shitty-sounding drum machine. It sounds like a demo that some kid made in his bedroom, except this kid has gotta be well into his fifties by now. Jesus Christ. —Ben Snakepit (Smog Veil)

TOXIC HOLOCAUST:

Evil Never Dies: CD

Do you like eighties speed metal? You will love TH. Imagine hearing bands like Kreator, Destruction, Hellhammer, Bathory, or the first Slayer LP. That is the same vibe as here. But one thing is

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different here. This a one man show: Joel Grind takes his love of speed metal and plays all the instruments on recordings. On tour, he brings a band along to be able to play his music to the masses. This year when he toured the states, he brought along the New York band Blutwulf. I hear for his tour next year he is bringing along Japan's Abigail to open and back up his madness. My introduction to TH is his latest, being the *Hell on Earth* CD. This is a re-release of the *Evil Never Dies* LP and bonus tracks from the *Death Master* EP and a comp track from the *Outbreak of Evil* EP. Straight up speed metal here. Growling vocals, bright distorted guitars, simple bass lines, and single bass drumming. Three beers in, headbanging is a simple fact without over analyzing the musicianship. Devil horns in the air type of stuff. If I have piqued your interest, buy everything by this guy. —Donofthedeath (Gloom)

TURPENTINE BROTHERS:
Get Your Mind off Me: 7"

Blues and soul used to heartbeat around the highways of America one road house, chapel, and boozing ken at a time. It's a different war of culture now; against the stucco footprints of chain store giants. In between the toes, a jangly fungus is proving resistant to the merciless stomps and flattening. Surely, The Turpentine Brothers owe the Reigning Sound several quarters in their tip jar, but this is far from a straight-up rip. They hold steady on their own with organ-alive, harmonic-piping, gasoline-

soaked, rag-on-the-mouth music that stands proudly by itself. Great stuff. —Todd (Alien Snatch)

UNCLE SCRATCH'S GOSPEL REVIVAL:
North of Hell: CD

A bizarre gospel two piece consisting of Brother Ant and Brother Ed, who share guitar, vocal, drum and other assorted instrumental duties. The vocals are sung through a megaphone and there's a palpable redneck vibe. I'll bet if you saw these guys walking down the street, they'd both be chewin' on a piece of straw. USGR is at their best when tackling country tinged spirituals like "Johnny, Jesus & Me," "You've Got a Friend" and "Lord Took my Hand." They come off like a couple of awv-shucks charmers. Not so appealing are the psychobilly stylings of "Gates of Hell." If the picture in the liner notes is any indication of their live show, they must be a hoot to witness. A true and pleasant surprise. —Josh Benke (Rock N Roll Purgatory)

VANNA:

The Search Party Never Came: CD

This is fucking horrible. Go turn on MTV2 or Fuse or whatever. I guarantee you that whatever's on *right now* sounds exactly like this. The promo sheet says it's "metalcore" but it sounds like shitty emo to me. You know, the kind of emo where the guy sings in a death metal voice sometimes. Music like this is the bane of all real punks' existence. If you're a douchebag, I would say to get this, but

you probably already have it. —Ben Snakepit (Epitaph)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
CD Sampler # 1: CD

Like most compilations, this sampler is a bit uneven. But, any comp that includes The Dimestore Halo's "Hot Pink Stereo" is automatically guaranteed a good review from me. Plus, you get The Soda Pop Kids, Kevin K, The Joneses (I love "Tits and Champagne" almost as much as tits and beer), The Urgencies, The Electric Kisses, and tons more. Full Breach Kicks is one of the best labels going these days, and this is a real fine introduction to their recent catalog. I could have done without The Street Brats and the Rock'n'Roll Stormtroopers, but that's just me. —Brian Mosher (Full Breach Kicks)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Connecticut Fun: CD

Reissue of the hardcore comp that came out in '85, which was a few years before I started listening to anything remotely like this. The only band featured here to ever get some decent recognition outside of New England is Youth Of Today, which is a shame because there are some really strong tracks on here: Contraband's "Red Lights over St V's" and both tracks by Bad Attitude (it's a little disheartening how applicable "Holy War"—about war with Iran and Iraq—still is today). There are some songs that are mixed with a bit too

much metal guitar noodling, and a few with tons of reverb on the vocals, but you have to consider the musical climate at the time it was originally recorded. And, for that, it's one hell of a time capsule for a scene rarely heard about. —Megan (Incas)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:
Ostry Dyjur Vol. 2: CD

I know the following things about this. It's from Poland and the cover illustration has an American Indian, a punk puking on an interviewer's microphone, a guy who looks like Venom from Spider-Man strangling a skinhead, and a girl with dreads and no shirt on involved in some sort of pit. There's some weird shit going on in Poland. Because there's no booklet and very little info on the sleeve, I'm assuming this is a comp of punk from Poland but the first track leads off with some smooth rhumba number that towards the end almost turns in to a ska song. After that though we're off and running. Some songs in English, some not, some okay...some very not. One thing is for sure though, I approve of the use of accordion on a lot of these songs. The accordion is a tragically underutilized instrument in punk. Thank god for Eastern Europe. —Steve (Pasazer)

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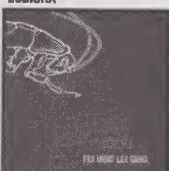
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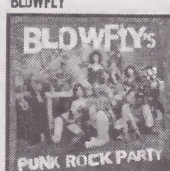
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bands like AC/DC, Rose Tattoo, or Midnight Oil, the scope and breadth of what came off of that oft-neglected continent might prove to be a bit mind-blowing. To school you on high points of the Australian rock underground comes this stunner of a compilation, showcasing tracks from assorted singles released during the period identified in the title. That means you get seminal tracks from the legendary (The Saints, Radio Birdman, X, Birthday Party), the well-regarded (Died Pretty, Hard-Ons, The New Christs, Celibate Rifles), assorted *Killed by Death* faves (Psycho Surgeons, The Scientists, The Victims) and a bevy of obscure groups (God, Wet Taxis, Pel Mel, Sunnyboys, Thug, Makers of the Dead Travel Fast, Do Re Mi and a buncha others), all presenting a wide variety of punk and post-punk noise for your listening pleasure, and all of them nothing short of fuggin' cool. There's something for nearly everyone's taste on display here—from the grungy proto-punk of The Saints to the trash/thrash of the Psycho Surgeons to the new-wavy pop of the Triffids to Died Pretty's gloom-rock to the Motorhead-meets-Descendents musings of the criminally overlooked Hard-Ons—and those with broad tastes will truly appreciate the bounty before them. Truly indispensable, this is. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feel Presents)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Tales from the Australian Underground, Vol. 2: 1977-1990: 2 x CD
It is my understanding that volume one of this series spanned the 1976-

1989 period. From this i infer that this volume has the best song they could find from 1990, plus the stuff they had lying around from 1977-1989 that wasn't good enough to make it into Volume 1. Huh. It starts strongly enough, with the original, four-minute-plus version of Radio Birdman's "New Race," the Saints' "Know Your Product," some blatant theft of the Vibrators' "Baby Baby" by some teenagers who had their manager play the instruments on their records, and "More Suicides Please" by the Thought Criminals, whom i was previously unfamiliar with. Things go rapidly south after that (no small feat for the only continent other than Antarctica that's completely south of the Equator), descending into completely irredeemable Missing Persons-isms at the beginning of the eighties, and muddling into similarly nowhere college rock doldrums thereafter. Nothing of value emerges in the last nine-tenths of this collection by any band you've never heard of, and the contributions by those you have (Lime Spiders, Hoodoo Gurus, Feedtime, Happy Hate Me Nots) are nowhere near enough to stop the product as a whole from circling the drain (CLOCKWISE, *s'il vous plait*). One supposes this might be a handy item to have around if you're doing your Master's Thesis on Australian popular music of the eighties, it's due tomorrow, and you can't find Volume 1 anywhere; in all other cases, i suspect the opposite is true. **BEST SONG:** Radio Birdman, "New Race"

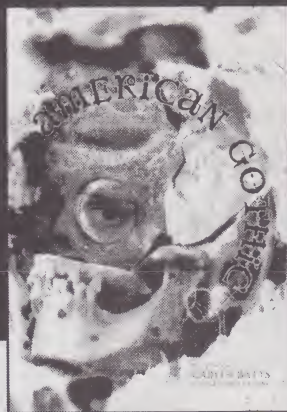
BEST SONG TITLE: The Thought Criminals, "More Suicides Please"
FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: If you would like to experience great frustration, grab a handful of Australian currency and try organizing the bills into a nice, tidy stack. —Rev. Nørb (Feel Presents)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Wassup Rockers Soundtrack: CD

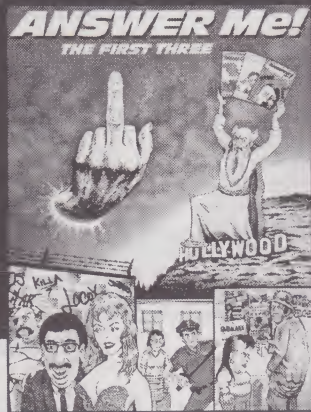
In the interest of full disclosure, I gotta say that, speaking as an older Latino punk who spent most of his life playing punk rock, this CD and the related movie *really* fucking bug me. It's not the music on here—courtesy of South Central Riot Squad, Defiance, The Revolts, The Retaliates, The Remains and L.A.'s Moral Decay (not to be confused with the '80s band Moral Decay, who tore shit up in the SGV back in the '80s)—that irks me. It's just more of that certain breed of hardcore that kids have slammed to in L.A. backyards since the '80s, nothing more, nothing less. No, what really pisses me off is the apparent seediness of the whole *Wassup Rockers* trip. Putting aside the supposed questionable, lurid motives and controversy over director Larry Clark's—who first came to prominence with the movie *Kids*—selection of subject matter for this and his previous films, I'm more than a little curious about how the leads for *Rockers*—a bunch of South Central Latino skatepunks upon which the whole shebang, from subject matter to script to stunts to soundtrack, is based—were financially

compensated for their work. Did they receive proper compensation for playing principal roles? Did they get stunt pay for doing their own stunts? Although numerous articles indicate the script was based on their stories and that they ad-libbed much of their dialogue, they didn't receive writing credit. Is it safe to assume, then, that they also weren't given screenwriters wages for their efforts? Finally, for their efforts on the soundtrack being reviewed, will they be receiving writing and performance royalties for their inclusion here? Judging from the demo-quality-at-best recordings of the songs included (and finding no "recorded at" credits anywhere on the CD insert or tray card, one is led to assume that they indeed compiled this from assorted demos), my guess is the answer to all of the above would be a resounding "no." I seem to remember Tony Adolescent once saying that the sum total he received for the inclusion of "Amoeba" on the soundtrack to *SLC Punk* was one copy of the soundtrack, and I'm willing to bet that's the case here, at best. The thing is, if they're gonna fuck these kids out of all that is due to them, the least they could've done is sprung for a really good recording session for their bands. At worst, that would've cost a couple of weekends with a computer rigged with ProTools and someone who knew how to use it. My suggestion is to seek out the bands on the Internet, get their demos directly from them and ignore the film and its soundtrack. —Jimmy Alvarado (Record Collection)



American Gothic: The Art of Carlos Batts

Pages: 128 Size: 8.5x12"
Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 0-9764035-0-1
Madness and genius collide in American Gothic, photographer-filmmaker-artist Carlos Batts' answer to Grant Wood's famous 1930 portrait of the same name. Contains a full length compact disc by musicians: Mastodon, Pg. 99, Swarm of the Lotus, Pig Destroyer, Dog Fashion Disco, Radiation 4, Daybreak, Buzzoven, Agoraphobic Nosebleed.



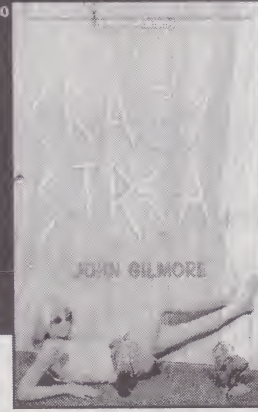
ANSWER Me! The First Three

Pages: 368 Size: 8x10.5"
Price: \$21.95 ISBN: 0-9764035-3-6
This fat, gorgeous, ridiculously underpriced anthology contains the legendary hatezine's FIRST THREE ISSUES in their entirety. It also contains SIXTY NEW PAGES of wistful *ANSWER Me!* memories and tasty new articles. There's a strong chance that this is the best book ever published. Only an idiot would refuse to buy it.



Nina by Blag Dahlia

Pages: 112 Size: 5x8"
Price: \$9.95 ISBN: 0-9764035-4-4
Blag Dahlia, of the infamous Dwarves, has written this truly twisted tale of a young girl coming of age with no apologies. Nina is the story of an object of desire who gives as good as she gets, spanning the USA in search of cheap thrills and black lipstick. Cover art by Detroit artist Niagara (of Destroy All Monsters).



Crazy Streak by John Gilmore

Pages: 128 Size: 8x5"
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A twisted excursion into seething sexuality, desperate alienation, incest and conscienceless violence; a book destined to be as controversial as Nabokov's "Lolita." This story is brutal in its realism. No fairy-tale romance or overly convoluted plots needed. It's not ironic or kitschy; it's certainly not begging to be loved. *CRAZY STREAK* is as believable as some of your worst, most confused and visceral moments.

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VARIOUS ARTISTS:

We'll Inherit the Earth...

a Tribute to The Replacements: CD

This CD was like experiencing all the stages of drunkenness, but out of order. 1.) Anticipation. Before I listened to it, and just read the song selections and bands, it was like shotgunning three Sparks. Tiltwheel? Ergs!? Tim Version? This Is My Fist? Alright! Stoked. 2.) Expectations left unsatisfied. First spin: huh, maybe this isn't as awesome as I first thought it would be. I'm torn. I know the Replacements songs really well and if the bands' covers are too close to the original, it makes me want to listen to the original, not the cover. If the bands' covers are further stretched, I feel like their bastardizing the 'Mats. No one wins. 3.) The room is spinning. Take a step back. Lay down, don't move, and let it wash over you. Pace yourself. Find the songs that kill, that work both as covers and "alternative universe originals." Against Me! nail "Bastards of Young" and Drunken Boat wallops "Kids Don't Follow." 4.) Lace up your drinking shoes for paced, fun imbibing. The fact that the Queens track doesn't have Joe singing about his cunt having a dick, and is a sorta touching rendition of "Unsatisfied," is oddly nice. Let the music blend and bob into the background as the party warms up. Let the CD play on repeat and let it stretch out over its hour of playtime. 5.) The morning after, headache dully buzzing in the background, and the once-declared-as-pussy "Here Comes the Regulars" covered by Thomas of

Strike Anywhere and Rob Huddleson makes a new type of sense. 6.) Look back and fondly remember the good times while you reach in the fridge for hair of the dog. In recap: didn't like it at first, played it more and more, and now it's pretty darn great. Like virtually all comps, not all gold, but neither were some of the originals. I mean, fuck, who needs gods who never failed themselves, right? -Todd (1-2-3-4 Go!)

VICE SQUAD: Defiant: CD

I know I'm gonna get crucified by more than a few buddies for this, but here goes: Although the lyrics are often of the "we're defiant punx/ gonna change the world" variety, the music here—from the guitars to Beki's now-raspy vocals—screams bad, uninspired metal dipped in punk flourishes to give it street cred. Now I'm willing to concede that a) it's been some twenty-odd years since this band's prime, b) Beki's the only original member at this point, c) her post-Vice Squad "progression" away from punk and more towards rock as a solo artist and with Ligotage is bound to creep into her more recent endeavors, but what I wanna know is a) why does "progression" so often translate into "pretentious crap rock," b) how a band can use such a legendary moniker when it contains at most the original singer and none of the original song architects and not see it's a recipe for disaster (also known as the "TSOL Rule of Suckdom of the 1980s"), c) why said sole original

member of said band would want to piss all over her former band's legacy by releasing something that makes "sub-par" sound like a compliment? Do I want a complete rehash of the *Stand Strong Stand Proud* album? Not by a long shot. Do I want hard-hitting, angry, topical and SINCERE music from a band claiming to be "punk," especially one claiming such a respected pedigree? You bet yer fucking boots I do, kid. Sadly, I find nothing approximating that here. -Jimmy Alvarado (SOS)

VIOLENCIA VIOLETA:

***Violent Living:* CD**

Some good ol' anarcho-punk here, leaning more toward the Conflict rather than Amebix side of the road. The lyrics are in Portuguese, which makes sense considering the band hails from Portugal, but an extensive lyric sheet translated into English is provided. Nice to hear there are still some bands out there that circle their A's but haven't wholly embraced the whole "crust" sound. Diversity of sound is always a good thing, kids. -Jimmy Alvarado (Cat Food Money)

VOLENDAM DISEASE:

At War with God: 7"

New Japanese band that features ex-members of Youth Revenge who play some bad ass fast style '80s punk with probably a love for Danish HC based on the name. First three tracks blazed through so fast, I barely got the chance to soak in what was coming out of the speakers. I flipped the record over

and thought they were going to slow down a bit but that was a tease. They kept firing off more rage. It was like getting blindsided by a garbage truck while you are driving your economy car. The damage level is going to be high. Five songs total that is straight ahead pissed off punk with no filler. Now I need some aspirin because they hurt my eardrums. -Donofthedeard (Kangaroo)

WARTORN: In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy War: CD

I'm reaching deep in to my crusty record cover memory banks to recall what cover they're ripping off here. I want to say it's a Hellkrusher 7"... but something is telling me it was something from Portland. I don't know. It's got a skull, a chaos symbol, bullets and an AK-47. Let's just say they're not mining the depths of their imagination with the booklet here. Is Profane Existence-core a term yet? If so allow me to hop on the band wagon with that for this record. Rawr Rawr Rawr crust with political lyrics, and an interesting story about almost dying from prescribed drugs for a mental disorder from an ineffectual doctor who kept upping the dose. If you ever wanted to see what an elephant shaped novelty thong looks like on a man get yourself this record. -Steve (Crimes Against Humanity)



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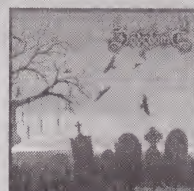
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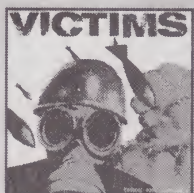
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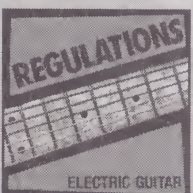
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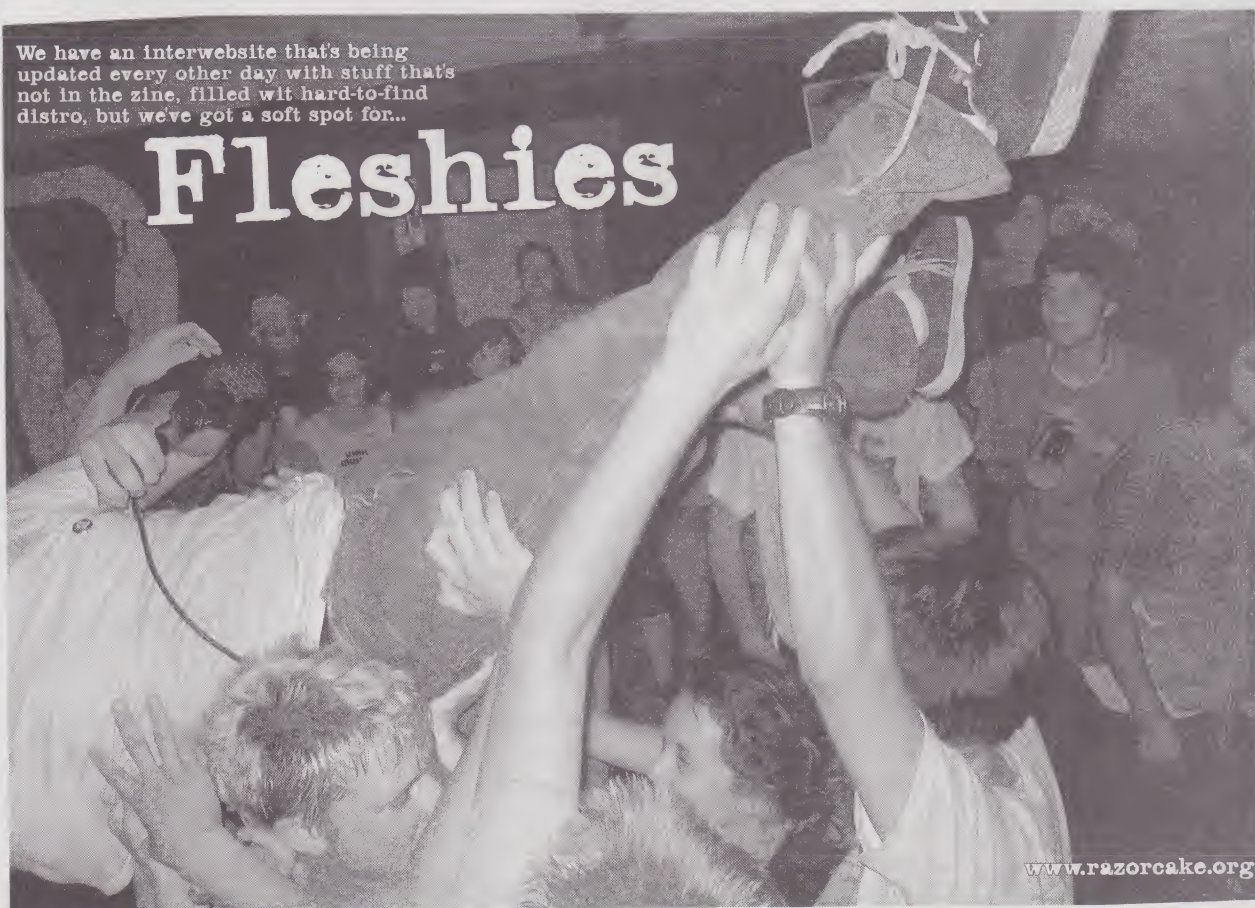
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- **Stomp**, 78 Rachel E, Montreal, QC H2W 1C6 Canada
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"THIS GUY DOES STUFF LIKE EAT BREAKFAST WITH HIS PARENTS, SELL DRUGS, TRIES TO SHOVE HIS DICK IN A BONG, ALMOST GETS RAIDED BY COPS, EATS A HAMBURGER AND WATCHES HIS FRIEND GET PUNCHED IN THE EYE." (410 JESSE ST.)

AVOW #21, \$2, 8½" x 5½", copied, 30 pgs. On the cover and in the introduction Keith claims that this is the worst issue of *AVOW* ever. And while I haven't read every issue, I can soundly say that this one is not as good as the other ones I've read. But I like Keith's honest-as-hell approach to the world and it's not like this issue is total shit. If you're a fan of the past issues, nothing should stop you from picking this up. —Daryl (Keith Rosson, 1426 SE 25th #3, Portland, OR 97214)

BITCH #33, \$5.95, 8½" x 10½", offset, bleached newsprint, full color cover, 96 pgs. Aptly subtitled as the "feminist response to pop culture," *Bitch* takes things that I may not have really thought about, peels back the skin, and exposes, through theory and practice, a much needed interpretation of the world around us. Some of it's a little lost on me—and I think it's perhaps because I don't watch that much television—like the decrying of a VW spoketoy/bot (and a warm remembrance of softer, fuzzier VW commercials) ending with a call for jamming VW's email boxes with cries of wrong-headedness. That seemed a little weird: campaigning for and against commercials. Yet, the bulk of *Bitch* is awesome—especially in the longer pieces, where legs are stretched and ideas are fleshed out. My favorite parts of this issue: a (bondage-laden) historic view of *Wonder Woman* comics, the uncomfortable bed-partnering of sex (literally, filmed and streamed) and environmentalism, and the empowerment piece about girls in self-defense training. Tons of reviews, to boot. *Bitch* is smart, fun, and comes highly recommended. —Todd (1611 Telegraph Ave., Ste. 515, Oakland, CA 94612)

BLAH ZINE, THE #2, \$?, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 26 pgs. I say this with all niceness and sincerity: *The Blah Zine* embodies all the great qualities of naivety. Its

editor, Cheryl, just seems so frickin' nice. She interviews without guile. She seems so excited and willing to listen (and shares a no-bake peanut butter cookie recipe). And it's this niceness and openness in *Blah* that won me over. Because when someone's friendly from the get-go, the little stuff (like punctuation and grammar not being aces) slides on by and you sit on some grade-A interesting conversations. For me, the jewel of this issue is the first section of a long interview with Mike Watt, where he pulls out irrefutable nuggets like, "I think dancing came back with disco and around the same time punk... pogo. One was pretty people. One was ugly people." And it's this simple directness (and good life advice) that makes me give *Blah* a thumbs up. —Todd (No postal address: myspace.com/theblahzine)

CELEBRITY PETS #3, \$2 or trade, 6½" x 8", copied, 20 pgs. I've never been to Fresno, California, but I've often heard it described as the armpit of the state. I don't know how that affects or applies to the folks there or their work, but it would appear that if *Celebrity Pets* is any indication, the quality of the zines isn't a huge step above average. Upon seeing the title, my hope was that this was going to be a zine about pets that belong to celebrities. Alas, it was not. Instead, it had generic, short interviews with Love Equals Death, Groovie Ghoulies, and the Pink Spiders. There were some album reviews and fashion tips amongst other things, but this issue was quite boring and tired. Maybe it's not that different than what I've heard about Fresno after all. —Kurt Morris (PO Box 28211, Fresno, CA 93729)

CLENCH #1-8, free, 8½" x 11", copied, 1-2 pgs. Clench is a single photocopied page—front and back—intended for the "hardcore-obsessed." Each issue discusses a different band. Some of the bands blessed with an issue dedicated to them are: Void,

Agnostic Front, and the F.U.'s. If you are "hardcore-obsessed"—and I know that you are—go ahead and mail Phillip Knowles about the next issue. He seems like a really nice guy who loves music and wants to strengthen the scene in any way he can. —Daryl (Phillip Knowles, 240 Spring Hill Dr. #210, Roselle, IL 60172-2470)

EAVES OF ASS #5, \$2 or trade, 7¼" x 4¼", copied, 44 pgs. This time around Craven takes on the annual Autonomous Mutant Festival—he goes out to the woods, takes drugs, gets drunk, gets festive, gets frustrated at the possible ecological damages being wreaked on the forest by everyone tromping through it and leaving trash everywhere, gets disillusioned with what sounds to me like a judgmental gathering of a bunch of noncommittal, dropped-out, privileged, idiotic hippies. But again, that's this reviewer editorializing. He continually tries to find meaning in the gathering, trying to cull some sort of worth to it beyond a bunch of marginally like-minded people getting fucked up for a few days out in the woods. Craven is definitely one of those zine writers who is still trying to write a zine, one who is unafraid to tackle bigger issues than, yeah, crushes and coffee, even if he doesn't do it terribly well sometimes. Pretty sure I've read every issue of *EOA*, and I've gotta say, this one's probably my least favorite. Certain things (the more than usual amount of typos, repetitive sections, etc.) really just made me feel like there was something rushed about this issue, that it was put out somewhat prematurely and could have used another edit or two. Regardless, Craven's still is one of them *writerly* writers, and *EOA* is still one of those rare breeds: a personal zine that's continually trying to step above the watermark of vapid, half-sensical emo-meanderings and cookie recipes. —Keith (Craven, Rock, PO Box 20692, Seattle, WA 98102)

FAT IS BEAUTIFUL, \$?, 5" x 8", copied, 44 pgs. This zine helps expose a lot of false premonitions that folks might have in regards to fat people (hey, the zine tells me to call them that). Covered are health issues, false assumptions people have about fat people, quotes from folks about fat people, essays on the subject and a list of resources of subjects related to being fat: art, politics, health and fitness, body image, food and dieting and so on. Much of the material in here was honest and fair and helped to expose many of the prejudices that fat people go through in their daily lives. Having family members who are fat, this was a good eye-opener for me to understand what their lives are like and how they might feel on a regular basis. —Kurt Morris (Crystal Hartman, 301 N. 5th St., Columbia, MO 65201, crystal_hartman@hotmail.com)

GAINES STREET SAINTS #4, \$?, 8½" x 7", copied, 44 pgs. Listen, Hank, editor-man, I'll be the first to tell you that you're going to get a bunk deal in this review—I'm not even gonna pretend to remotely understand or care about skinhead culture, anti-racist or not. I don't get "crews." I can't tell if you're joking when you say that you're "Floridian by birth, skinhead by the grace of God." I'm not bagging on you for any of it, I'm not saying it's lame, but I just don't get the draw. Coming from someone who's gotten his ass kicked by jocks and rednecks more than a few times, a lot of what I see regarding skins, even anti-racist ones, totally smacks of thuggery, pulling the same gang-mentality bullshit that bros and cowboys have been pulling on me for years. So, with the heavy skinhead slant to *GSS*, it's pretty much a given that I'm not gonna care for it all that much. Inside, there's interviews with various Florida oi bands, with nearly every band being asked the exact same questions, like Hank just sent out a mass email and printed the answers from the bands that responded. There are also dozens of

apparently unedited questionnaires from various women in the area about why they've joined a roller derby league and why they like it, a short article about a counter-protest to a racist rally that was supposed to take place, and lots of fuzzy photos. It's cut and paste, which I'm for from an aesthetic standpoint, but the typewriter-font-on-a-white-background shtick was totally boring. It's only the fourth issue, so hopefully this guy will try to pose some more interesting questions to the bands he interviews, and try to make the layout a little more interesting. As for my little blurb about skinheads, well, it looks like I've fallen victim to *editorializing* once again. Fuck. —Keith Rosson (GSS, PO Box 3411, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3411)

LOLLIPOP #69, free, 11" x 8½", glossy, 80 pgs. Weird, *Lollipop's* fashioned like one of those truck magazines—one of those mags with a sweet-ass, flame-jobbed jalopy with some woman in a bikini draped suggestively over it, you know what I mean? Except, get this: it's for *metal dudes*. I mean, seriously, *Lollipop's* pages are peppered throughout with these fashion sections that show supposedly "real rock" women in these crazy ass, formfitting outfits, documenting their likes and dislikes ala *Playboy*, and listing their Myspace or web addresses. Beyond that, there's interviews with Bloodhound Gang, Nashville Pussy, Arch Enemy, etc. Lots of nu-metal band photos, ads, and reviews. Musically, I'm into about 0% of what they're covering, and I just couldn't get over the creepy swimwear catalog aspect of it. —Keith Rosson (Lollipop, PO Box 441493, Boston, MA 02144)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #280, \$4, 11" x 8½", newsprint, 150? pgs. Does *MRR* really need to send out review copies any more? I honestly doubt it, but bless 'em anyway. This time around we're looking at interviews with Disconvenience, Grupo Sub-I, Hjerte Stop, Bill Daniel, Svartenbrandt, Rosenbombs, and Up The Voltage, as well as band histories/articles about APF Brigade and Desperate Bicycles, and recollections about New Orleans. There's also some pretty extensive photo sections and the requisite columns, ad, reviews, etc. *Maximum's* one of those zines that it's really easy to just kind of slough off and take for granted, assuming it'll always be around. Which is actually kind of crappy, considering how much effort and how many people it takes working together to get zines like *MRR* and *Razorcake* out every

month. So, in a word or four: still awesome, still essential. May they continue to introduce and inspire generations and generations of young whippersnappers to this whole punk thing. —Keith Rosson (MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

POWER MACHINE, \$2.50 or trade, 7¼" x 5½", copied, 28 pgs. Zine put out by one Hannah Potassium, documenting her struggles with the concepts of privilege, patriarchy, and sexism she encountered while being one person among many to create and live in an ill-fated squat in Emeryville. The writing's a little stiff at times (there's copious amounts of footnotes, a bibliography, etc.), coming across a bit too dry and academic for me, but she's tackling some issues here that are, by their very nature, mired in lots of gray areas, so I guess it makes sense. I guess the main bummer about it all was that Hannah was the one who found the squat, cleaned it up (mostly by herself), and slowly found herself living with a shit-ton of people in this squat, the majority of whom didn't really care for her at all, whom she was continually at odds with. If you're interested in squatting, or discussions about the use (or misuse) of words like "community" and "safe spaces," check this one out. Granted, there's only one person's side being presented in a zine like this, but if she's to be believed, I feel really bad for her—starting something with a lot of hope and excitement, only to have it all end in filth, ruin, and resentment. Definitely had me thinking about all the drawbacks and positives to renting, squatting and/or homeowning. —Keith (Hannah Potassium, PO Box 8363, Emeryville, CA 94662, power-machine@riseup.net)

RISE AND THE FALL, THE #7, free in L.A., 5½" x 8½", photocopied, cardstock cover, 52 pgs. Cleanly and artfully laid out, sharply written, and bursting with pride (not prejudice) of hailing from San Pedro, CA, *The Rise* roots itself in one of the rarest things in America right now—a vibrant, awesome punk scene that thrives whether you care about it or not. What's undeniably great is that San Pedro's punks are a diverse, overlapping bunch, and this zine reflects that—from this issue's focus on artists, the Early History of San Pedro Punk, live reviews, to its update on local happenings and eateries. So, if you want to peek into the looking glass of the town that spawned the Minutemen, where Bukowski's widow currently resides (and gives these folks the rights to reprint Chinaski's poems), and is home to one of the most potent real-time,

fecund DIY scenes we have going, *The Rise* is waiting to give you a firm handshake and welcome you to their scene. Excellent. —Todd (PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733)

SECOND WIND #6, \$2, 5½" x 8½", offset, 36 pgs. So *Second Wind's* a skate zine out of New Mexico, put together by a woman and covering women's skateboarding almost exclusively. Granted, I'm an outsider—haven't skated in years and sucked when I did—so I could be waaaaay off on my mathematics, but I figure props should be given for covering and promoting a sport and culture that in many ways seems pretty heavily dude-centric. The zine's almost entirely photos (and mostly well-done photos at that), with plenty of captions and a random paragraph here and there regarding certain competitions. The rest of the zine is, essentially, made up of a review or two, and ads. It's a quick read, and I could have done without the energy drink and cell phone advertisements, but I guess you've got to take your print-revenue where you can get it. —Keith (Second Wind, 2311 Stevens Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112)

SHIT!, TURD TALES & STOOL STORIES, \$1 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 32 pgs. *Shit!* is a collection of twenty-one stories that all have to do with feces and the bodily functions that surround it. The stories range from boring to obscene to disturbing to fucking hilarious. One of them had me laughing for a good couple of days. I don't know what else to say about this zine; if you're into poop jokes and enjoy reading pretty humiliating stuff, go for it. It's a fun way to kill some time. —Daryl (Swimmer's Ear, PO Box 2076, Maple Grove, MN 55311)

SKYSCRAPER Summer 2006, \$4.99, 8" x 10½", glossy cover and printed pages, 120 pgs. Another issue of the big, snazzy *Skyscraper*. Tons of features/interviews (Built to Spill, Cursive, Tortoise, etc.), reviews, and the like; all with nice photos and a quality layout. As with most zines, some interviews were too long, others not long enough. My only legitimate complaint is that *Skyscraper* is almost too big. The reviews portion is especially tumultuous. Perhaps making this bi-monthly instead of quarterly would help make it easier to digest without feeling like such a struggle. —Kurt Morris (www.skyscraper magazine.com)

SLUG & LETTUCE #87, free in person or \$1ppd, 11" x 15", newsprint, 20 pgs. Issue #87 marks the nineteenth

anniversary of *Slug & Lettuce*. And yet, without fail, it is another beautiful issue. Yeah, the layout is the same, but the writing is fantastic and the columns are all really interesting. This issue they cover such things as one columnist going to Antarctica, a European tour journal from the band Requiem, Ecopunk Mike stating that "There's a point in everyone's evolution where the heart is bigger than the mind" and the implications that go with that, house show etiquette, and much more. There are also a ton of zine, book, and music reviews. If any other zine tried to get away with just having columns and some reviews, I'd probably hate it, but *S&L* makes it work every time. —Kurt Morris (PO Box 26632, Richmond, VA, 23261-6632)

SPIDDER #10, \$5, 7" x 7", hand silk-screened cover, photocopied, with a 7", 32 pgs. Smalltown desperation and boredom can bring out the worst in folks—small-headedness, celebrated ignorance, and regression. It can also bring out the best in folk—the blossoming of creation out of what would most consider "absolutely fucking nothing." And that's what *Spidder* and the accompanying *Rise Up Howling Werewolf 7"* is all about. It's an examination of "a place where nothing ever happens," where there are heavy forces in place (culture, family, jobs) that make sure that it stays that way. And not only is it a scream in the middle of cultural wilderness, it's a beautiful testament to building your own home (culturally), wherever you are. From the silk-screened cover (on the other side of a Life cereal box), to the comics about a penguin helping out a cat, to crude but effective drawings and the *Slacker*-like shuffling of *Howling Werewolf's* cancelled first show, to the ghost-like, home-recorded sounds of that band, I can't help but feel like something special's in my hands and my record player. It's a steal for \$5. —Todd (Arkam, 1925 Hwy. 69, Savannah, TN 38372)

TRACK MARKS, \$?, 5" x 8", copied, ? pgs. This zine is devoted to stories and poetry about trains. Most of the material only loosely relates to trains; a character heard one in the background or found him/herself standing next to some tracks. While that is a different take on incorporating your primary subject matter into a zine that is based around a specific topic, it would've been more interesting to read a zine about personal tales of riding the rails. Sure, it may have been done before, but it would've been far more interesting than what's here now. The current way it's set up, it's



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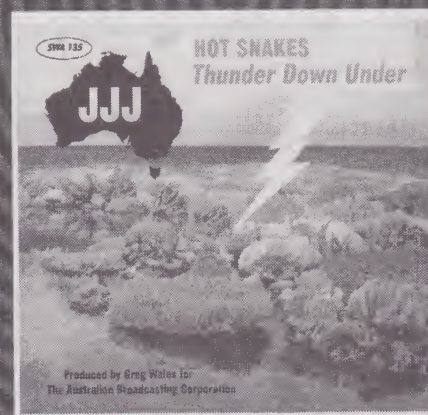
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like reading poems and stories from people who end up near Disney World or live near it, but who never actually go in and experience it. They're good to read about to a point, but eventually I'd rather read about direct experiences with the real thing. —Kurt Morris (Love Bunni Press, 2622 Princeton Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118)

UNDERWORLD CRAWL #4, \$1, 4" x 5½", copied, 40 pgs.
At first I hated this because I hate cynical personal zines, but then my day got shittier and I remembered that I fuckin' love cynical personal zines. If you've ever wondered how Holden Caulfield would react to taking his car to the dealership to get the goddamn thing fixed, you should probably get ahold of this and carry it around in your back pocket like you did with *Catcher in the Rye* when you were fifteen. —Daryl (R. Lee, PO Box 1421, Oshkosh, WI 54903)

VERBICIDE #17, \$3.95, 11" x 8½", newsprint, 84 pgs.
This one's been around for a long time, yet this is the first issue I've ever read. Revoke my reviewing license at will, that's fine. *Verbicide* seems to be covering stuff that's a kind of merging of the ages-old spit and razorblades of *MRR*, and the "safe but still hot" coverage of, say, *Spin*. Maybe it's just the glossy cover

and randomly colored pages that's making me head that way, though. Best parts of the mag were the lengthy and decent interviews with Anti-Flag, porn star Tera Patrick and her husband Evan Seinfeld, who slings the four-stringed axe of destruction in Biohazard, dude, but actually comes across as, shockingly, not a moron. There are also decent interviews with Atom from Armalite and Henry Rollins. There are oodles of reviews, ads, little half-page blurbs about bands, all that stuff. I mean, it's a quality publication for sure, and obviously people are into it, but I just don't really align myself or connect with a lot of the music they're covering and can't see myself ever picking this up again. —Keith Rosson (Verbicide c/o Scissor Press, PO Box 382, Ludlow, VT 05149)

WELCOME TO FLAVOR COUNTRY #8, free, 8½" x 5½", copied, 48 pgs.
What we've got here is something that, for all intents and purposes, really comes across as a personal zine that's in its infancy, but as the title says, this is apparently the 8th issue, so I don't know. The writing is fairly stiff and self-conscious "woah is me" fare, the layout is super rough, consisting of nothing more than pages upon pages of text with the occasional magazine photo and text pasted at the end of pieces.

The guy seems like a cool dude, you know, if a little withdrawn and self-absorbed; if I had to say anything about personal zines it's the fact that many of their writers aren't so good at drawing the correlations between their day to day troubles and the world at large. Personal zines seem a lot more captivating when the words within address the writer's struggles and the impact or response of the outside world. Otherwise, it's just sheer solipsism, which means you've got to be one fuck of a good writer to pull off an interesting zine. Hopefully the guy behind *Flavor Country* won't consistently resort to such symbolically laden fiction and self-conscious personal anecdotes in the next issue, because there's some promise here. —Keith Rosson (Kurt Morris, 8820 Stone Ave. N. #301, Seattle, WA 98103)

WHILE I WAS HIGH, \$1 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 24 pgs.
This is a collection of thirteen stories that happened to people while they were stoned. They can be funny sometimes, but they can also be pretty dumb. Sometimes stoners really bore me with all their drug talk. —Daryl (Swimmer's Ear, PO Box 2076, Maple Grove, MN 55311, shnazz5@aol.com)

ZISK #13, 7" x 8½", photocopied, 18 pgs.
Oh, man, I wish I could just come

out and lie and say that I love baseball, but I don't. Maybe it'll steep into me fully one day, but I can say this: I've come to the point in my life where I don't mind it at all. I went to a Dodgers game this year. It was fun and six dollars. It was like watching (million-dollar) fish while chatting with good friends and eating peanuts. I'll even find myself zoning out and watching it on TV for the simple reason that it's not insulting my intelligence, it's free to watch, and I don't know the ending after a minute of viewing. But, you know, *Zisk*—from the pure force of its enthusiasm and its undiluted joy—makes me want to like baseball more, to understand what the hell they're talking about sometimes. And, for the love of stuff I have no idea about, but the curiosity to follow things that are well written, *Zisk* excels. I learned the following from this issue: players actually put Superballs into their bats to make them hit further. Huh. I'm still wondering if the balls were whole or shredded, and how they got jammed in there, but, more importantly, this zine kept me curious about a topic I know close to zilch about and they invited me to stay 'til the end of the game. —Todd (801 Eagles Ridge Rd., Brewster, NY 10509)



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Americanjism #1-3

By Joe Denney, 112 pgs. ea.

The three graphic novels that compose the entirety of *Americanjism* must've taken years to complete; there's over three hundred pages of story here, full of exquisitely rendered illustrations that at times have an insane amount of detail thrown in 'em. From an illustrator's perspective, this guy's on top of his game: there's the aforementioned detail, the blending

to kids (the son, Grownkidman, is given "Americrack" to help him focus in school.) It's supposed to be a pointed satire of and diatribe against the double standards and duplicity inherent in government, religion, and Americana itself. Unfortunately, Denney tries, over and over again, to go for some kind of belly laugh but fails to recognize that, at least to this reader, there's not a whole lot that's funny about a mom sucking off her son. (Or

covers, and the near total lack of information anywhere other than an excerpt pasted on the back, this one reeked of a self-published endeavor. Not that that's bad at all—I'm not sure why I have higher expectations for self-published books than I do zines, but it's there regardless. I guess it's because you can forgive a writer certain transgressions when they're just putting out something that's twenty or thirty pages; when you get into the 200-300 page range, the decisions a writer makes can really start to wear on you.

That said, *Blind* is a pretty good book. It documents a few months in the life of a young Bay Area SHARP (Skin Heads Against Racial Prejudice) named Bryant. I've always felt that punk and its various offshoots are so goddamn hard to fit into fiction: writers run the risk of either glossing over certain things to make the whole wacky "punk" thing more palatable or compartmentalized, or they write about it in such an insular fashion that only kids already well-immersed in the scene will know what the fuck you're talking about. It's the same, I assume, with skinhead culture, but Rodriguez does a deft job of showing us the basics tenets of an anti-racist skin's "customs" or core beliefs without treating the reader like he or she is a fucking imbecile.

Another thing I appreciated was Bryant's struggle that came with the divisiveness of immersion in a subculture: the dichotomy

That's right, there's a whooooole lot of dude-chowder being fired off in these 300-plus pages.

of accurate, lifelike backgrounds and locales mixed with the odd-looking but consistently-drawn characters. You never get the feel that you've suddenly stepped into a different comic because the guy's style suddenly changes; he's always visually consistent, and the whole project is obviously a labor of love and lot of hours. And I imagine he really feels like he's making a statement with this thing.

Unfortunately, the statement is ultimately rendered moot, due to the fact that the bulk of *Americanjism* alternates between incredibly disturbing and absolutely, mind-numbingly stupid.

The story follows the McDonalds, a "quintessential American family." A father, mother, son, and daughter. I won't even really get into the story, because it's convoluted, scattered, pointless, and mostly just serves as an excuse for Denney to draw a lot of tits and cocks squirting jizz. That's right, there's a whooooole lot of dude-chowder being fired off in these 300-plus pages. There's also copious amounts of blowjobs, butt fucking, cunnilingus, drug use (intravenous and otherwise), facials, orgies, and fisting, among other gems. Some form of incest (sometimes with the whole family involved! Yay!) seems to occur about every five or six pages.

I mean, I guess I get what this guy's going for—the story is loosely based, among other things, around the hypocrisy of religion (the father is a hard-sinnin' minister), abortion (the daughter's already had a drive-by "McBortion"), and giving drug prescriptions

dad and daughter, mom-dad-and-daughter, brother and sister, etc. Take your pick; it's all here.) There are quasi-psychedelic passages in the book, lots of tirades about God and "reality," at which time some member of the family will take drugs, nearly die or in some form or another be sent to the astral plane, only to come back to *this* reality so the whole drugs-sex-and-stupidity trip can start all over again.

Like I said, this man can draw, and there is some kind of story being told here, but *Americanjism* fails so miserably as a whole by relying solely and repeatedly on visually "taboo" shock tactics and barbed dialogue to prove its point, rather than trying to utilize good storytelling, pacing, and some kind, *any* kind, of emotional resonance. I mean, I never cared for any of the characters at all, never cared what happened, and never once really felt like the story was going anywhere. All told, *Americanjism* is over three hundred pages of dirty pictures that tries desperately to make a point and simply winds up choking on its own cynicism, obviousness, and lack of heart. —Keith Rosson (Pipe Dream Comics, PO Box 432, Sag Harbor, NY 11963)

Blind

By K. Rodriguez, 254 pgs.

Having reviewed more than a few novels for *Razorcake* by now, I feel like I've gotten fairly good at spotting a self-published or POD (print on demand) book when I see one. And from its heavy use of Courier font on the

between that sense of pride in belonging to something larger than yourself, tempered with the danger of becoming just another yes-man to what the doctrine says is right. Rodriguez also does a great job of introducing us to the other major players in the book: Bryant's best friend Eddie, Phil, the skin that originally got him into the scene, his girlfriend Lori, Mark, the leader of the crew of racist skins, etc. Bryant's a likeable character, smart and questioning and, most importantly, fallible and believable. The story moves along fairly well; I don't want to give a lot away, but when Eddie dies after getting jumped by a crew of black kids, it instigates a chain of events that really jumpstarts the plotline. Like I said before, it was a good read: I've really got no interest in skinhead culture whatsoever, SHARP or not, but I was hooked on *Blind* within the first few pages. There's something to be said for writing that can do that to someone.

Still, there are a few things I really don't get about *Blind* and its author: how someone who's obviously such a *good* writer, who's managed to craft a novel that I actually read in about a day, can fall victim to such basic errors as poor grammar and spelling. I don't know if Rodriguez didn't have anyone edit the manuscript, or if whoever edited the novel didn't catch the errors either, but they're weird ones, glaring ones that are shockingly easy to spot.

I mean, "eachother" is *not* a word, it's two words. This shows up over and over and over again throughout the novel.

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Another quick example: "Nothing." she tells me. There's supposed to be a comma there, dude, not a period. Grammatical errors like this are placed repeatedly throughout the book, probably during ninety percent of the dialogue. I mean, honestly, it wouldn't matter to me in the slightest if it was just here and there, but Rodriguez has written the entire novel like that, and it's as jarring the 705th time as it is the first.

The other slight complaints I've got is that there are moments in the plotline when the veneer of believability seems to get stretched a little thin; everyone seems to either be related to or live on the same block as someone else, which could work in a small town setting, but we're talking about the Bay Area, you know? And the ending wraps up a little too nicely. I understand that that's how people often want their fiction to read, all the threads tied up, but the way it was handled was just a little *too* precise. But I guess I can't get much more specific without giving the story away.

Still, when looking at the comparative desert that is quality punk fiction and all of its sub-genres, it's best to not get too fucking picky. Because despite these critiques (the grammar and spelling can easily be fixed in a subsequent edition), *Blind* really is good and well worth reading. I, for one, hope that Rodriguez keeps writing and perfecting his craft, because there's definitely a talent there, and hopefully he'll be able to hit us with another book before too long. —Keith Rosson (Kendall Rodriguez, 8780 Floral St., Gilroy, CA 95020, punklit.com)

Manchild 2, The Second Coming

By Brian Walsby

You gotta love a book with a cover depicting Jesus stage diving, an image that perfectly encapsulates the mix of sacred and profane that make up its contents—biting commentary on personal life and punk society, depicted in another fine set of funny comics by the infamous Brian Walsby, a musician and artist whose scene cred runs longer than Demi Moore's career. The bulk of this collection is from more recent years, but the wit and signature style he developed in the pages of *Flipside* and *MRR* back in the '80s, although more refined, is still readily apparent. We're treated to more installments of "If Brian Walsby was Brian Wilson," scattered tales of dealings with punk's more "famous" purveyors, tributes to his favorite bands and heroes, and some serious skewering of "The Scene" and all of its ridiculous hypocrisies and contradictions, as well as more personal stuff about his life and living it in Raleigh. The super-serious and über-sensitive will, no doubt, find much to upset them—again what doesn't get their panties in a bunch?—but those with a good sense of humor and don't approach punk with a reverence that rivals the shroud of Turin will find stuff like "Most Heavy Metal Still Sucks" and "Desperate Times for the Peanuts" a hoot. I'm pretty sure I said it last time 'round, but Brian still has it going on, and I remain a fan. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.bifocalmedia.com)

Skate and Destroy: The First Twenty-Five Years of Thrasher Magazine

Edited by Jake Phelps, 288 pgs.

If you rode a skateboard in the 1980s, then you read *Thrasher* magazine. It's as simple as that. From '85-'89 I worshipped at its altar. When you're a teenage skate punk in a very small hick town, the chance to read and learn about what the skate scene was doing in the outside world was big deal. I learned tricks, I learned style, I discovered bands, and I realized that I was far from being alone out there.

Well here we are in 2006 and *Thrasher* has turned twenty-five and is still going strong. I honestly don't read it anymore, but my crippled ass can barely skate now anyways, so what are ya gonna do? The book itself is beautiful. The color, the art, the photos... it's all still so breathtaking. The thing that set *Thrasher* apart was its idea that skating was more than a pastime—it's a lifestyle—and that vibe flows throughout this tome.

What I think the book is missing is more history and stories told by those who were there. You know, some crazy shit was going on behind the scenes and I, for one, would have loved to read some of those accounts. There isn't enough writing and the stuff that is there is kind of all over the place. In the end, I wish it was more like the *Independent Trucks' Built to Grind* book that came out a couple of years ago. There was just more substance to dive into. This one still brings back the memories, though. —Ty Stranglehold (High Speed Productions)

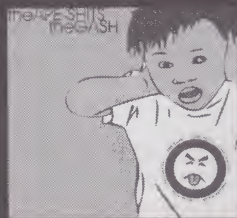
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Meet Me at the Tumor's Door: DVD

Meet Me at the Tumor's Door is decidedly an "amateur" work—it looks like it was shot with a camcorder, and the sound fluctuates from one interview and band performance snippet to the next—and yet it is also easily one of the best punk documentaries I've seen in years. Clocking in at under half an hour, it tells the tale of the suburbanization of the Santa Clarita Valley (the area surrounding Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park) and the ultimate rebellion of its younger, largely ignored population.

The Speedfreak's Ball: DVD

The good Captain has ventured into the world of DVD and this, his first release, ain't too shabby. Although personal tastes may vary, the punk/oi/ska/psychobilly-heavy lineup of bands—Guana Batz, Restless, Coffin Nails, Long Tall Texans, Bad Manners, The Riffs, Roddy Radiation & The Skabilly Rebels, Goldblade, Guns On The Roof, The Business, Argy Bargy, Section 5, and Crashed Out—makes sure that fans from each of those genres will find much here to please the eyeballs. The footage is shot with multiple cameras, the sound, while a wee bit rough in some spots, never gets any worse than "good," and the performances are for the most part spirited, with the mighty Bad Manners *still* able to blow all competition out of the fuggin' water. The lack of extras to be found on here was a bummer, but, on the whole, this is a nice initial foray into DVD and more than worth the watch. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi, c/o PO Box 501, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP10 8QA)

Til Death: DVD

It's official. I'm announcing it here for the first time: *Plan 9 from Outer Space* is no longer the worst film ever made. The new king of the dung heap is *Til Death*, a hopelessly amateurish stumble through the seedy world of drugs, strippers, and homicidal religious nutbags. Now, if anything in that brief description of this horrible little film in any way appealed to your prurient curiosity—and I can see where it might—let me spell it out for you, pig simple: This movie *sucks* and, if I may be permitted a garish *American Idol* reference, it doesn't even suck in a William-Hung-sucks kind of way. For starters, this thing

Let me spell it out for you, pig simple: This movie sucks

For the longest time, that area was kinda like the last outpost of civilization on the northern end of Southern California, with small housing developments spread out sporadically amongst broad swaths of nothing but dust and hills. I personally remember hearing stories from punks out there in the '80s about how fucking desolate the place was for a kid to live. In recent years, however, the area has seen exponential population growth, with housing and malls, and markets and businesses crowding into any space available. It also appears, however, that no more thought is being put into stuff to keep the kids entertained than when it was a wasteland, and just like Orange County in the late '70s/early '80s, Santa Clarita now finds itself with a large contingent of relatively well-off kids with fuckall to do, plenty of time on their hands, and just enough energy to stir up a little shit. Documented here is the frustration these kids feel, their sense of alienation from their surroundings and their reliance on punk rock as a vehicle with which to channel their angst. It also demonstrates the resourcefulness that has been inherent in punk since the beginning is still very much alive: faced with no place for gigs, they invent their own musical subgenre based around vocals, a bass guitar, and harmonica, and resort to throwing gigs in what looks like a public bathroom. Director Jennifer Swann (who herself is in her mid-teens, if memory serves) handles her story like a pro, deftly setting the scene in the beginning and then letting the subjects make their case. The result is a film that, while a bit rough in spots, is well shot and nicely cut, coherent, engrossing and never dull, which is more than can be said of the works of so many "professional" films, especially those dealing with the punk subculture. Can't wait for a sequel. —Jimmy Alvarado (Jenneration X Productions, PO Box 800757, Santa Clarita, CA 93180-0757)

looks like it was filmed by some junior high kid on his cell phone and the audio is so horseshit in spots that you can barely make out the klunky dialog that falls like crispy turds from the actors' mouths. By the time the credits rolled my brain had pulled up the covers and shut out the light, so I was in a drooling, catatonic stupor and didn't catch who's responsible for this sixteen car pile up. But suffice it to say, this plodding, hackneyed script was mailed in from the plugged-up backwaters of Dumpsville, U.S.A. The characters are so painfully one-dimensional and uninteresting that you don't care whether they get everything they want and live happily ever after or are brutally butchered and fed to stray retarded dogs. Even the token "crazy" guy in this film is Kevin Federline-level lame. The first time they showed him sitting shirtless at a table full of candles, reading ominous Bible passages, and grimacing like a constipated Jason Newsted, I chuckled—but by the third or fourth time, even that worthless teat had run dry. The acting, across the board, is beyond just cardboardish—this acting is cut from the heavy duty corrugated cardboard that your new outhouse comes in. And don't let the cover art and all the gothic fonts fool you; this is about as much of a bloodbath as *Dancing with the Stars*. (I know that's three "reality" TV references in this review, but this film deserves it.) Even gore fiends and darksiders hoping for lurid displays of murderous depravity will be bored out of their little skulls. This film, that dresses itself up so heavily in the death motif, has two—count 'em: two—whole death scenes and they are so lurchingly executed that no amount of slow-mo jump cut editing and cornball special effects can save it from being Keystone Kops laughable. But even at that you barely can burp up a chuckle. And that's ultimately the problem with this problematic

film: it somehow manages to be thoroughly inept without being funny as hell. Just-plain-bad-and-nothing-else is a flavor I have not yet cultivated a taste for, I'm afraid. But I'm working on it. In the meantime, *Til Death* is a good movie to pick your nose and daydream to. —Aphid Peewit

We Jam Econo: The Story of The Minutemen: DVD

Chances are that if you're reading this magazine, you are at the very least aware of The Minutemen. Even if, for some reason, you have never heard them or liked them, this film is a must see.

The story of the film is simple. The filmmakers were fans of the band and decided to make a documentary about them. Many fantasize about this, but few actually not only do it, but do it as comprehensively and amazingly as Tim Irwin and Keith Schieron have.

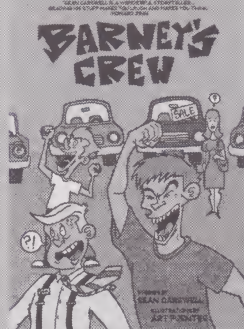
Through interviews and testimonials, we are taken through the story of three men. From childhood in Pedro to a lonely desert van crash, the personnel, and music of The Minutemen are shown for what they were—revolutionary—and everything that punk should have been and rarely was. The passion in the words that every person speaks within the film is staggering. When Mike Watt speaks about D. Boon, you can't help but feel his love, admiration, and loss. When anyone speaks about the band or its members, it is with fondness, respect, and disbelief. If all that isn't enough to give you a chill, the piles of live footage of the band will. They were simply stunning.

The package itself is also stunning. It's a two-disc affair that not only gives you the movie, but throws in the four music videos the band made, a bunch of deleted scenes, and an uncut interview from 1985. The second disc really seals the deal though featuring sixty-two live songs from three separate performances. Top it off with a sixteen page booklet and call it all you ever needed to know about The Minutemen... And trust me, you do

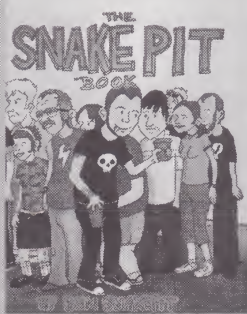
need to know. —Ty Stranglehold (Plexifilm, 45 Main St. Suite 504, Brooklyn, NY 11201)

Wellington Ladies Welfare League, The: Hate the Sinner, Love the Sin: DVD

Kind of a grand title for an eighteen-minute, two-camera live set (or, hopefully for those in attendance, partial live set), but once you see how cute they are you'll forget all about that. I think it's four songs but they're not written down and my attention span can't keep track for sure. Anyway, how it sounds is sloppy and trebly, sometimes dropping hints of the Germs and Flipper and Screaming Mailboxes Of Destiny, and lo-fi as determined by video camera microphones; not really bad, but the EQ is kind of wack, particularly when someone's head gets in the way. How it looks is: Terence has a Stratocaster and an afro, Rico plays his bass behind his head for a while and his wallet falls out of his pocket and swings around on the chain, Florian doesn't do anything exciting (though he did promptly answer a question I emailed him), and Jake has kind of a big head that snarls and sneers and says things like, "If we can catch 'em and eat 'em when they're under ten, you'll never hear a crying kid in a movie again," and, "this is our last jiggity-jam jamboree," and his body takes off its clothes in stages until he's dancing around in his underpants (boxers, which are funny but not nearly as funny as white briefs would be) and then it falls down on the stage at the end. Despite the videocam sound, the thing presents a charmingly noisy outfit that I hope manages to retain that quality when they get around to proper studio recording. —Cuss Baxter (wlwl.nyc@yahoo.com; www.myspace.com/wlwl)



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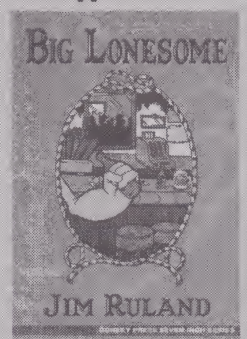
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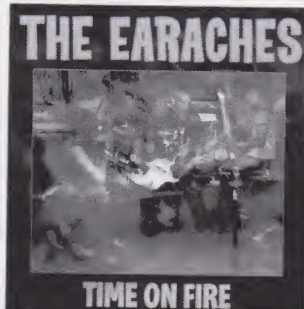
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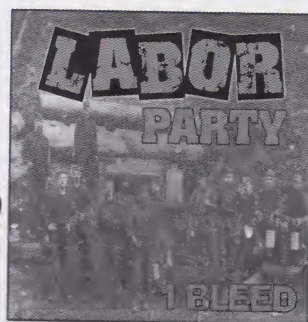
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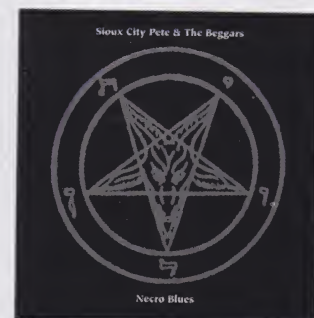
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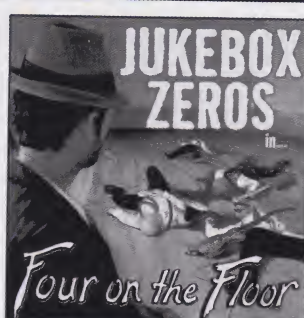
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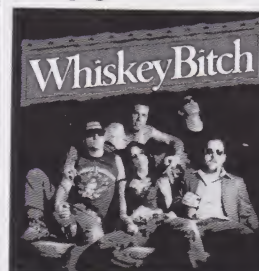
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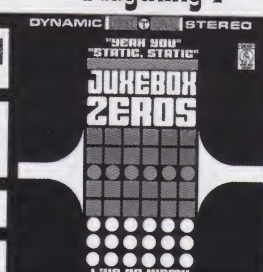
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